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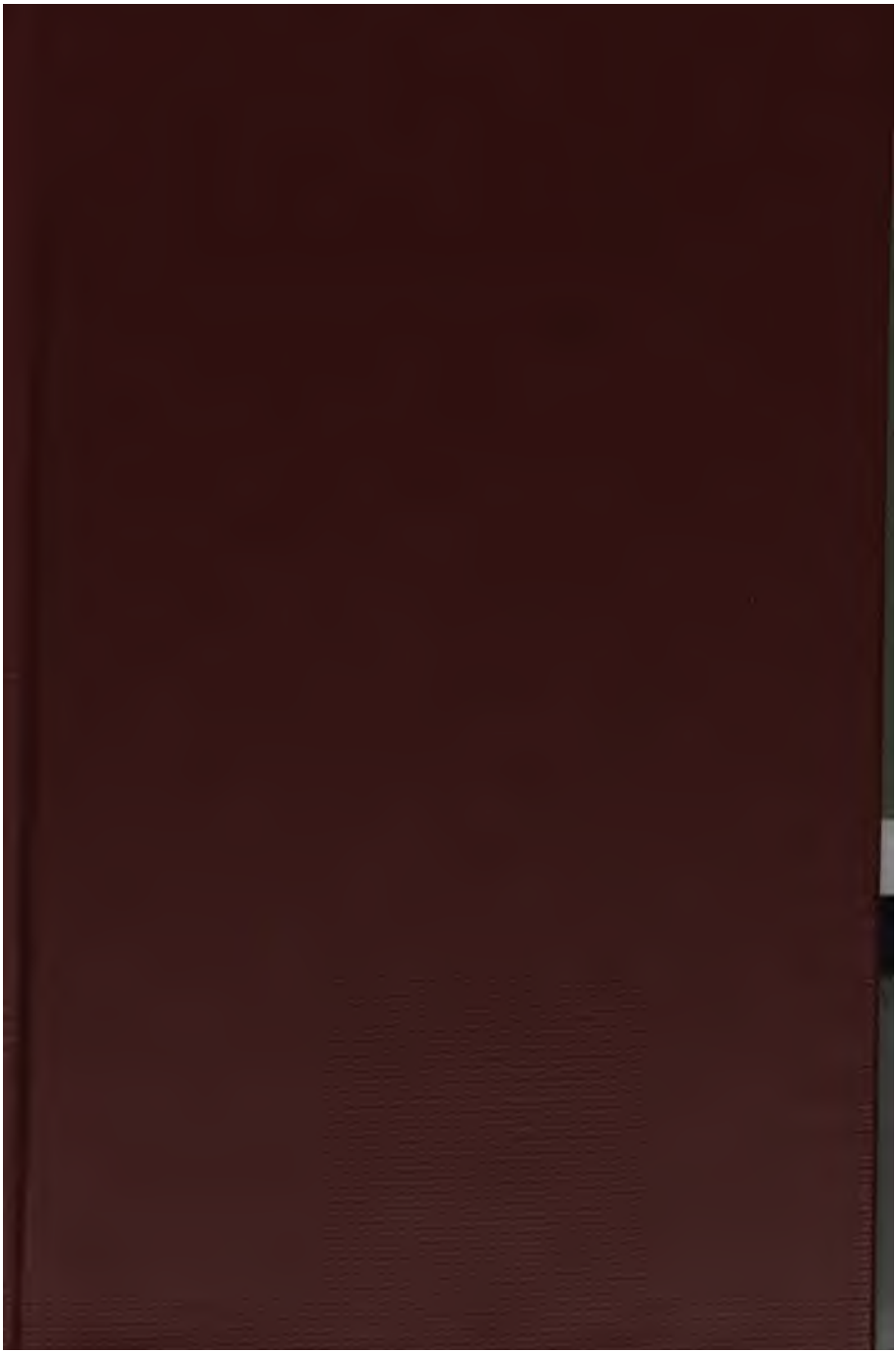

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OF

# WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING,

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE AND MANUSCRIPTS.

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# CONTENTS

OF

# VOLUME SECOND.

## PART SECOND.

(CONTINUED.)

### CHAPTER IV.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

ÆT. 34-42. 1814-1822.

Distaste for Controversy, 3. SECTION FIRST, Religion, 4. SECTION SECOND, Human Nature, 28. SECTION THIRD, Christ and Christianity, 49. SECTION FOURTH, Society, 63.

### CHAPTER V.

MIDDLE-AGE MINISTRY.

ÆT. 34-42. 1814-1822.

Free Inquiry, 84. Relations to Opponents, 87. Arianism, 92. German Writers, 94. Wordsworth, 95. Fall of Bonaparte, 98. War with England, 102. Peace Movements, 109. The Seminole War, 116. Privateering, 117. Capital Punishment, 119. Missions, 120. Bible Society, 121. Theological School, 125. Harvard University, 129. Benevolence, 137. Vestry, 139. Growing Reputation, 145. Private Papers, 146. Invitation to New York, 166. Family Relations, 168. Death of his Brother, 169. Death of his Sister, 174. His Marriage, 177. Children, 182. Baptism, 187. Illness, 189.

### CHAPTER VI.

EUROPEAN JOURNEY.

ÆT. 42-43. 1822-1823.

*Journey in New Hampshire* and Vermont, 193. Parting Words,

201. Ocean, 202. The Lakes, 208. Wordsworth, 216. Coleridge, 218. Switzerland, 220. Views of Society, 222. Education of his Children, 229. Death of his youngest Son, 233. Return, 240.

---

# PART THIRD.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE MINISTRY AND LITERATURE.

Devotedness to his Duties, 245. Views of the Ministry, 252. Theological Students, 280. Dr. Channing as a Preacher, 285. Debility, 294. Settlement of a Colleague, 297. Relations to Federal Street Society, 302. Views of Pastoral Duties, 317. His Function, 322. Dr. Channing as an Author, 323. His Literary Character, 335. Miscellanies, 338. Literary Correspondence, 343.

## CHAPTER II.

### RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.

Plan of a Work on Man, 354. His Position of Thought, 357. Self-reliance, 364. Longing for Light, 372. "I am little of a Unitarian," 381. Principles of Moral, Religious, and Political Science, 403. Correspondence on Religion and Philosophy, 408.

# MEMOIR.

## PART SECOND.

(CONTINUED.)

# MEMOIR.

## PART SECOND.

(CONTINUED.)

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

ÆT. 34-42. 1814-1822.

CONTROVERSY was utterly uncongenial to Mr. Channing; his temper, tastes, desires, habits, all conspired to make it repugnant. He was discriminating in processes of thought, instinctively repelled dogmas, however time-hallowed, which were abhorrent to the dictates of his moral nature, made nice distinctions between opinions resulting from accidental influences and truths addressed to the reason of man universally in the creeds transmitted by tradition, and was earnestly watching for a brighter spiritual day to dawn; but, while thus impelled to join the ranks of the progress-party, and fitted by eloquence to be a leader there, he yet appreciated so justly what was good in the tendencies of established bodies of believers, and so cordially sympathized with the character displayed by Christians of every denomination, that he felt he was doing violence to his heart

by withdrawing from their communion. Above all, he was so conscious of the darkness, ignorance, sophistry, overspreading the theological world, and so fervently longing for some full vision of Divine Wisdom, that a position of sectarian dogmatism seemed to him as absurd as it was presumptuous. He was chiefly desirous to forget the things behind and to press on. It would be treating him with great injustice, then, not to present some more positive traces of his spiritual growth during these years of painful dissension. How very small a space controversy occupied in his mind is proved by the fact, that, among his unpublished sermons and manuscripts of that period, there does not remain *a single controversial paper*. He was seeking to reverence and love God, to respect and sympathize with man, to form himself and his fellows anew in Christ's image, to mould society upon the pattern of Divine justice. This will appear in the following extracts.

## SECTION FIRST.

### RELIGION.

*Oct.* 1814. DIVINE GOODNESS AND JUSTICE ONE. "I would have you penetrated with the conviction that God is most just; but I would have you hold this truth in consistency with that most interesting of all truths, that God delights to do good, and that all his operations are directed by benevolence. Benevolence and justice are harmonious attributes of God, to which all others may be reduced; and the true idea of justice is, that it is a branch or mode of exercise of benevolence.

"This thought is so important, especially as giving us the clearest view of the justice of God, that I shall proceed to offer a few remarks in illustration of it. There is reason to fear that this attribute has not always been placed in its

true light. Some persons, misled by confining their attention to a few passages of Scripture, have represented justice as a distinct perfection from goodness, and as sometimes clashing with it, and opposing the wishes of Divine benevolence. Such sentiments are dishonorable to God, and injurious to true piety, by stripping his character of its chief excellence, the *infinity* of goodness. Such representations of justice have induced some to regard it as an attribute to be dreaded rather than to be esteemed and loved; and many have wished to exclude it from their conception of God. But an attention to the general scope of Scripture will correct the error, and teach us that God's justice coincides with goodness, and is even a branch of it, and that it is therefore to be regarded with affectionate reverence. . . . . .

"Divine justice is, in fact, an exercise of enlarged benevolence, enjoining and enforcing by rewards and punishments those dispositions and actions on which the peace, order, improvement, and felicity of rational beings depend. I repeat it, *the principle of justice is benevolence.* It is God's goodness which inclines and impels him to maintain a moral government, or to treat beings according to their characters; for nothing has so much influence as character on the happiness or misery of his universe. The more benevolence a being possesses, the more he will honor, reward, and encourage that spirit of universal love which is the very soul of happiness, and the more he will discountenance that selfish and ungrateful spirit which disorders, and darkens, and desolates creation.

"God's justice, then, is a wise benevolence, employing rewards and punishments to exalt intelligent creatures to the most perfect and happy character, to a participation of that love or moral goodness which forms his own felicity."

1816. SENSIBILITY TO SIN. "'I will arise and go to my

father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' There is no man, who knows himself, who will not admit that the language of this text is an acknowledgment which should often proceed from his own lips. All, indeed, have not committed the same sins. The stain of guilt is not equally broad and deep on every conscience. Some, through the good providence of God, and the influences of a wise and pious education, have escaped the gross vices into which the prodigal son was precipitated, and some from their earliest years have been swayed by the principles of piety. But none have advanced in the path of duty with a step which has never faltered. No man has been always true to God, and to the dictates of his own mind. All have sinned. All have cause for humble acknowledgment, and the sense of unworthiness before God should form a part of every man's habitual tone of feeling.

"I am aware that this duty of preserving a sensibility to our sins has often been overstated, or enjoined in language too unqualified or unguarded. Men have sometimes been addressed as if they had nothing to do but to remember and lament their sins, as if they could not speak of themselves in language too full of abasement, and as if there were a virtue in doubting their capacity for good, and denying whatever improvements they may have made in holiness.

"Do not imagine for a moment that Christianity encourages an unnatural, morbid, extravagant mode of thought. It calls you to other duties and services besides the recollection of your sins; and it teaches you, even when engaged in these recollections, still to be just to yourselves, to think soberly or judiciously, to charge on yourselves no imaginary or exaggerated guilt, and to be sensible of virtues, if you really possess them, as truly as of defects and transgressions. True humility has its foundation in a correct estimate of our characters. It is the virtue of an enlight-

ened understanding. It is to be formed, not by fixing our thoughts exclusively on the worst parts of our conduct, and ascribing the guilt of these to our whole lives, but by observing our whole lives impartially, surveying the good and the evil in our temper and general deportment, and in this way learning to what degree we are influenced by the various dispositions and principles which enter into our character. Such discriminating attention to ourselves will make the best of us humble; but a humility thus formed will be very different from that vague feeling which some persons cherish, that they have contracted enormous guilt. We shall thus learn to know what are the particular defects and sins which we ought to confess, what proportion they bear to our whole character, and what methods may be most successfully applied for their correction."

1820. REPENTANCE. "We repent then, and then only, when, seeing a propensity to be evil, we resist it as such, and bring it into subjection to the principle of duty. Repentance is a revolution of mind which we resolve upon, in which we are voluntarily active, and which is established by our perseverance. The command to repent is founded on the fact, that God has given us a power over our own minds; and until this power is exerted, until a change is produced by our own deliberate efforts, we are not penitent.

"When I speak of power over our own minds, I do not mean that a man can by a single act of his will, by the effort of a moment, change his character, efface the impression of years, calm the violence of long-indulged anger, cleanse imagination from impurities on which it has long surfeited, or raise to God a mind which has grown to the earth. These miracles are not suddenly wrought in the mind, any more than is the full-grown and fruitful tree made to spring in an instant from the seed. The work of undoing evil habits, of retracing wrong steps, of subduing passions which

in our folly we have allowed to become our masters, is gradual and slow. But still, a man who acknowledges the importance of such a change, who feels his responsibility, and who expects to reap as he shall sow, has power given him to accomplish it, — power to gain daily victories over himself, — power to fly from situations which tempt him too strongly and surely from his duty, — power to reflect on those great truths respecting God and his mercy to the penitent, and his inflexible purpose of punishing persevering guilt, which weaken vice and build up holy resolutions, — power to avail himself of virtuous companions, pious examples, and the counsel of good men, — power to examine himself, and learn his particular danger, — and, above all, power to pray to God, the original of all strength, success, and purity. We are endowed with these powers, which, if exerted, will certainly make us better, will change the frame of our minds, and effect an amendment which, though it may not be perceptible from day to day, becomes very obvious when we compare distant periods of our lives. It is by the use of these powers that all true repentance is accomplished. Some, indeed, tell us that repentance is a work done immediately for us by God, that we are transformed, regenerated, renewed by a sudden and resistless agency of the Divine Spirit. But why, then, are we called to repent and renew ourselves? Why is penitence assigned as a duty, and the neglect of it punished as a crime? True, it is God who gives repentance. All good comes from him, whether spiritual or natural; but it comes through the powers which he bestows, and through his blessing on the faithful use of them. The character is never changed in a moment, or without our own activity.

"Repentance, we have said, is a change of mind effected by our own exertions. Another characteristic of repentance is, that it is a universal change, a turning from sin, at least as far as the will is concerned. Repentance is a strong

purpose to remove every thing evil from our character. It excepts no form, mode, degree, of evil. It makes no compromise with sin, but wages against it an unsparing and exterminating war. I do not repent, if to bribe conscience I sacrifice one evil desire or pleasure whilst others are tolerated, if I hope to atone by earnestness in some duties for negligence in others, if particular virtues are used to weigh down particular sins, and a general correctness is made a substitute for efforts to improve. To repent is not to do wrong with moderation and under certain restrictions. It does not mean that we allow ourselves to wander only a certain distance from our duty. To repent is to try to perform our whole duty, to mark every known departure from it, and to aim at universal rectitude of heart and life. Repentance is not, indeed, one with full perfection. It is a state consistent with many failures and sins. But it is perfect in its seed and root, perfect in its aim and aspiration, perfect in purpose and prospect. God accepts it because it is a pledge of spotless purity, and an advancing step towards it. . . . . .

"Some, when they speak of repentance, mean little more than that they have grieved for transgression. Now sorrow is, I admit, an entrance-way to repentance, a preparation for it, a means of it; but it is not the grace itself. The truth is, we must toil and struggle, as well as lament; and grief does no good any farther than it leads to a habit of watchfulness, and of opposition to the first motion of guilty desire. The common sorrow of men over their consciousness of misconduct is no great virtue. To mourn for a past sin is neither a rare nor a high attainment. The difficulty is, to hate the sin before it is committed, to look upon it in the moment of strong temptation as we shall do when it is performed, to resolve against it when it is yet in our power to withhold our act, and not when it is completed and irrevocable."

1815. SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES. "There is another class of Christians, who, whilst they believe that God constantly operates on the human mind, and that without his operation no fruits of goodness are produced, yet believe that the mode of his influence is essentially different from that presented in the view just given. They believe that Divine influence is not sudden and irresistible, but suited to the nature of man as a free and accountable being; that it is habitual, gentle, persuasive, offering truth to the mind and motives to the will, but leaving the individual at liberty to comply with or reject it. They conceive that compulsion or irresistible power would entirely destroy the virtue of human actions, would reduce man to a machine, and would thus entirely defeat God's end, which is to render us objects of approbation and reward. They conceive that our whole goodness is to be ascribed to God as its author, because he gives us all our powers, our understanding, our consciences, our knowledge of duty, our capacity of improvement, because he furnishes in his gospel the most powerful motives to obedience, and because, by the silent influences of his providence and spirit on the heart, he suggests good thoughts, awakens desires of holiness, and furnishes all the strength which we need to resist temptation. But they believe that God's agency stops here, that he does not in any manner compel men to follow the light and the motives which he presents, — does not force them to use the strength which he bestows. It depends on themselves whether they concur with or resist his grace, whether they use well or neglect the powers which he gives, whether they will serve God or disobey him."

1817. WALKING WITH GOD. "It is the earnest desire of the pious man, whose heart has been touched by God's good spirit, to feel what he believes, that God is with him; and his attention is often withdrawn from all finite things,

that he may bring home this thought with power to his heart.

"The quickness of perception, the sensibility, to which the mind, by use and time, may attain on these subjects, is not easily believed by those who have made no progress in religion. The pious man, whose mind is exercised on God, comes to see him in a peculiar manner. He has a consciousness of his presence which he cannot easily describe or communicate to one who has lived wholly in the world. In scenes which to others are blank and desolate, he feels that he is not alone; and in society where others see only their fellow-beings, a higher presence is revered and perceived. Even when thinking of outward things, there is, if I may so speak, in the breast of a devout man, a latent sense of God; just as, when we are near or in sight of an individual whom we respect, there is a consciousness of him, and a reference to him, even though we are conversing freely with other beings.

"The pious man finds in the whole of life, in its successes or reverses, in the kindness of friends or the calumnies of foes, in the difficulties and trials of his state, calls and motives to this secret converse with God, and life becomes more and more interesting in proportion as it strengthens this sacred intimacy. Often, when to those around he seems to be living among things seen, and engaged by human agencies, he is holding a high and pure intercourse with the Father of his spirit. And this piety brings its reward in the serenity and refinement which it imparts to the whole spirit of him who thus walks with God."

1813. THE DIGNITY OF PIETY. "What is there which gives such dignity to our nature as the capacity of knowing and of loving the best of beings? It is chiefly this capacity of religion that lifts us above brutes, that allies us to su-

perior orders of beings. You must at once acknowledge that the mind is ennobled just in proportion to the grandeur and sublimity of the objects on which it is employed. Think, then, of the elevation of that mind which habitually directs itself to God, of that heart in which this infinitely great and good being is enthroned. We ought to consider piety as the highest, most generous, and dignified attainment which is placed within our reach, — in fact, as the noblest characteristic which an intelligent creature can exhibit.

"It is melancholy, that piety should not be associated in every mind with the idea of dignity and honor. But, unhappily, religion has been so often worn as a mask by the unprincipled, it has so often been accompanied by mummery and superstition, that some have associated with its venerable name feelings of contempt and degradation. They think that to be devout is to be weak. Of all delusions there is none greater than this.

"We should feel that piety is the very spirit of heaven, the very life of angels, a pure celestial flame, ever tending to that world from which it descended, and aspiring towards Him by whom it is enkindled. We should feel that piety partakes the glory of God, who is its object, and assimilates us to him; that it gives warmth to benevolence, strength to fortitude, firmness to integrity, and calmness and peace to afflicted virtue. These are the venerable and attractive attributes in which piety should be arrayed."

1816. Resemblance to God. "There is something most affecting in the thought of resembling God. It is a reflection which ought to fill and almost overwhelm our minds, that we have a nature capable of bearing the image of God's perfections. This single view of our nature throws round it a lustre infinitely surpassing all the honors of the world; and this thought of resembling God is not a pre-

sumptuous one. The purity, the virtue, to which we are called in the gospel, and which men have in a measure attained, is *the same in nature* with that which constitutes the glory of God. In particular, that disinterested love, that diffusive benevolence, to which Jesus Christ so emphatically calls us, forms the highest glory of the Divine character. The language of John on this subject is remarkable. "God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God." Astonishing thought! By Christian goodness we are made partakers of God's nature, we shine with a ray of his light, we share his highest perfection, we become temples of the Divinity, God dwells in us. This grand reality is too faintly felt by us. We do not with sufficient force conceive the intimate relation which we may sustain to God. We do not heartily believe that Christian virtue constitutes us his children, by making us like him. We do not bring it home to ourselves, that in sinning we are extinguishing a ray of Divinity within our souls, and that by every step in moral progress we are ascending towards God, the Original and End of all excellence and felicity."

1818. TRUE PIETY ONE WITH ACTIVE GOODNESS. "Religion is a high degree of delight in all the perfections of God, — in his wisdom, his rectitude, his benevolence; and what is the most acceptable expression of this veneration? Is it enough to admire and praise? Do we not most efficiently manifest our esteem by seeking to become what we praise, by transcribing into our lives the perfections of God, by copying his wisdom in the judicious pursuit of good ends, his justice in the discharge of all our obligations, and his benevolence in the diffusion of all possible happiness around us? Then is our love of God the most exalted, when in our several spheres we aim to be like him, to reflect his glory, to act for the great end for which he is ever active, the improvement and happiness of every being within our influence.

"I wish you to feel that religion, love to God, is in no way at war with our relations and present state. It does not take us out of the world. It is not inconsistent with any of the useful pursuits of life, but unites them with itself, and makes them oblations to God. He who feels the true influence of religion does not relinquish his labor. On the contrary, he becomes more industrious, labors with more cheerfulness, is more contented with his lot, however difficult. Religion furnishes motives which give to existence a dignity and animation such as he was unconscious of before. Neither does he forsake society. On the contrary, his social character is improved. Taught by God's goodness, he looks round on his fellow-beings with new tenderness. A more benignant smile lights up his countenance at sight of human virtue and happiness, a more frequent pain is felt at sight of human guilt and misery. He is more conscientious, more just in his transactions, more faithful in all his relations, milder in his temper, and more active in his charity. Neither does he give up all his enjoyments. His religion cuts off no innocent and healthy stream of pleasure. It heightens pleasure, by making it more rational, more pure, more equable, more consistent with all the duties of life. This, my friends, is the nature and influence of true religion.

"In one word, religion is designed to refine and improve our whole nature, to make us better in every condition, to awaken all our faculties, to render us active, intelligent, generous, pure, temperate, meek, contented, and serene. And it is genuine just so far, and no farther, as these effects are produced. This influence of religion over the whole life is the proper standard by which it should be measured."

1819. PIETY AND MORALITY. "What is it in God which calls forth our veneration, gratitude, love, filial attachment? What attribute gives him a claim to these sentiments? On this point there is little difference of opinion. All Christians

will tell you that God is chiefly to be loved and revered because he is good or benevolent, and because he is righteous or just, — because he desires at once the happiness and the excellence of his creatures, — because he rejoices to send benefits on all who are fitted to receive them, — because he enjoins and rewards virtue, and abhors and punishes impenitent guilt. Benevolence and righteousness, then, are the attributes on which *Piety* chiefly rests as its object, and by communion with which it acts and grows.

"But consider a moment what benevolence and righteousness are. Are they not the very qualities which we mean by *Morality?* What is morality but the exercise of a benevolent and just temper towards all beings within our knowledge and influence? If so, what is God's character, the character which we are to love, but Perfect Morality? — what but the very dispositions, in their fulness, which conscience enjoins upon every man, and which form what we call rectitude? To love God, then, is to love morality in its most perfect form; and thus we see how religion and morals pass into each other and become one.

"This idea seems to me too important to be passed over lightly. Men have always sunk a great gulf between piety and morality, religion and rectitude, devoutness and virtue. To love God has been thought something quite distinct from loving our neighbour, loving our duty, loving right and worthy actions. But they are not to be divided. To love God is the same thing as to love rectitude, for God is rectitude; this is the central principle of his character. His character is the perfection of morality, and the love of him is the love of morality. The love of God is but another name for the love of essential benevolence and justice; — it is a sincere and obedient delight in a Divine government, by which these virtues are manifested, enforced, spread abroad, and renewed most gloriously. So inseparable are religion and morality. If we could conceive of God as

wanting the qualities and attributes which in men we call moral virtues, we should thereby tear up and destroy the vital germ of piety. Nothing would remain for our love, veneration, and filial attachment to cling to in God. He would have no claim on us. It is because he is The Good, because he is a moral being, and because in loving him we love Perfect Morality, that we are bound to love him with all the heart, soul, and strength.

"According to these views, the genuineness and strength of our religion appear altogether in our love of righteousness and goodness, and in our endeavour to approach God in these moral perfections. I know religion is generally represented as something different from this. The labor of men has always been to divorce piety from virtue, — to substitute adulation for moral obedience, acts of homage to God for equity and benevolence to men. Heathenism was little more than an attempt to conciliate the Divine favor by outward rites, to please God by other means than a pure and good life. We cannot wonder that men fly to these false modes of religion, for the obligations they impose are light and easy, when compared with those of rectitude. It is vastly easier to flatter the Supreme Being than to subdue ourselves. Nothing is so hard as to root out bad passions, to be upright, at whatever cost, and to be benevolent and charitable under all provocations and difficulties. To seek a resemblance of God's moral purity is unspeakably more toilsome than to praise him with transport. . . . . .

"The happiest influence of religion appears, not in giving us occasional joys and raptures, but in communicating delicacy and power to our sense of duty, in strengthening conscience to resist all created things when they oppose its convictions, in exalting our ordinary life, in making our control of the passions complete, our charity superior to all sacrifice and suffering, and our uprightness immovable as the throne of God. The happiest influence of religion appears, not in

raising us to something higher than morality, for that would be to raise us above God himself, but in giving us sublime ideas of morality, a pure will and high aim, a purpose of excellence such as never could exist without a knowledge of God's character, and a hope of his aid in imitating his goodness. Religion makes us moral by renewing our characters and lives in the image of Divine virtue. It forms us to a rectitude, and benevolence, and purity of a higher order than worldly men can conceive. In this its glory and strength are made manifest. Religion is the perfection of morality.

1816. THE HAPPINESS OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE. "The human heart not only needs objects of affection, but it demands an object vast, infinite as God, completely to fill and to satisfy it. The soul of man, though often debased and contracted, often discovers to us a remarkable property, perhaps the most remarkable in its constitution, — a certain insatiableness of desire, a love of great objects, a discontent with what is narrow and limited, a thirst for something better than it finds on earth. This principle has sometimes been called the love of the infinite, and though often suppressed by want, and oftener by vice, it is ineradicable in human nature, and shows to us that the human mind can find repose only in the Infinite Being. God is the only fit end and object for such a being as man. The world cannot fill his mind. You see him discontented, restless, even amidst its fairest prospects. A secret uneasiness preys on him, which he can neither analyze nor describe. The truth is, his soul whilst confined to the world has not yet found its true element. He has desires and affections to which nothing here is proportioned.

"Whilst earthly objects are exhausted by familiarity, the thought of God becomes to the devout man continually brighter, richer, vaster, derives fresh lustre from all that he observes of nature and providence, and attracts to itself all

he glories of the universe. The devout man, especially in moments of strong religious sensibility, feels distinctly that he has found the true happiness of man. He has found a Being for his veneration and love, whose character is inexhaustible, who, after ages shall have passed, will still be uncomprehended in the extent of his perfections, and will still communicate to the pure mind stronger proofs of his excellence and more intimate signs of his approval."

1816. HEAVEN. "Descriptions of this nature too often convey the impression that heaven is a state of rapturous ecstasy, suspending reason and the calm exercise of understanding. It is indeed true, that the Scriptures teach us that in the future life the affections will be powerfully excited. New sensibility will be communicated to the heart. God will be loved with a vastly purer and intenser love than is known on earth. But still, the understanding will not be sacrificed to the feelings. Devotion will be calm, deliberate, reasonable. It will be the fruit of extended knowledge. All the faculties of the understanding will be exerted and invigorated, as well as the affections; and the happiness of heaven will possess that serene and reflecting character which it is becoming and honorable for rational beings to enjoy.

"Another representation of heaven which seems to me unfavorable to a strong impression of its happiness is this; — heaven is often described as a place where eternity will be spent in immediate acts of Divine worship. This error arises from a too literal and narrow interpretation of passages in Scripture. Their true meaning is, that at all times, and in all places, spirits in heaven will possess that sensibility to God which places of worship are particularly designed to promote. Whatever region of this vast universe they may visit, they will regard it as God's empire, God's temple; his presence will be felt, his perfections be traced and adored, his will *be cheerfully* obeyed. This spirit of devotion, which we

ought to cherish on earth, will, indeed, be the habit of heaven; but its exercise will be consistent with the greatest variety of scenes and employments, and very unlike that wearisome monotony of an endless round of religious services which some seem to anticipate.

"I proceed to consider another view of heaven which renders it uninteresting. Heaven is sometimes described in a manner which excludes the idea of improvement, of progression. The thought of a stationary existence, of remaining the same through eternity, of a world where the mind, as it looks forward to endless ages, will see no change, no progressive ascent to superior virtue, is a most discouraging and melancholy one. The human mind seems so impatient of limits, it so delights in boundless prospects, that we can hardly feel as if it would be happy, even in heaven itself, were it to find that it had reached its goal; that no accessions were to be made to its knowledge and goodness; that no nearer approach could be gained to God and superior orders of being; that all above it was forbidden ground, an inaccessible felicity.

"Such conceptions of heaven are altogether inconsistent with what we know of the faculties of the human understanding, which seem capable of indefinite progression, and with what we see of the works of God, which teach us that he delights in a progressive creation. We ought rather to conceive of heaven as a state which will offer far greater means of improvement than the present, which will open new fields for thought, new worlds for research, which will inspire a more intense desire of moral greatness, and give continually increasing energy and splendor to all the virtues which ennoble our nature. . . . . .

"Another error in the description of heaven, which I think renders it less interesting, is that the thought of society is thrown too much out of sight. Now human nature is essentially social. It wants objects of affection, companions

to whom it may communicate its thoughts and purposes, and with whom it may act and enjoy. Pleasure is tasteless without friendly participation, and every view of heaven excluding this is unfavorable to an impression of its happiness. We are too apt to think of heaven as a solemn place. It ought to be viewed by us as a place of cheerful society. The countenances of its inhabitants should seem to us irradiated by a benign smile in their intercourse with one another, and their piety, though reverential, should seem to us a filial and happy sentiment, which enters into the conversation, and which they delight to manifest together.

"Another view of heaven which seems to me to weaken its interest is this; — its inhabitants are often described as forming a world by themselves, as having no connection with any other beings. Heaven seems to be considered as a region separated from the rest of the universe. Now an improved and benevolent mind can hardly escape the desire of extending its acquaintance with this boundless universe of which it forms a part, and heaven would seem a place of confinement, did it shut up its inhabitants for ever from every other region. But we ought not to conceive thus of the future state of good men. We need not doubt the fact that angels whose home is heaven visit our earth and bear a part in our transactions; and we have good reason to believe, that, if we obtain admission into heaven, we shall still have opportunity, not only to return to earth, but to view the operation of God in distant spheres, and be his ministers in other worlds. . . . . .

"It is not impossible, that, in our intercourse with other worlds, we shall meet with beings who are passing through the first stage of discipline, like that which is now assigned to ourselves, — beings exposed to pain, temptation, and sorrow, beings who may need our sympathy and aid, and to whom we may render the same offices which we have reason to believe angels now render to the human race. It seems to

me that we do not render heaven a less interesting or less happy world, when we suppose that its inhabitants retain the tenderest sensibility, and feel for the sufferings which may be endured in other regions of the creation. There is a sympathy which, though in a measure painful, gives a peculiar charm to existence, and which a good man would not wish to resign; and we ought not to believe that this is excluded from heaven.

"Once more, the descriptions which are given of heaven are often, I think, rendered less interesting than they should be, by false ideas which are entertained about the perfection of its inhabitants. It seems to be thought, that, because good men are to be perfect hereafter, they will all resemble each other; and hence that diversity of character, of taste, and habits, which contributes so much to our happiness, is made to give place to a monotonous and unvaried excellence. But all God's works are marked by variety, and to this they owe much of their interest and beauty.

"Will all this variety be blotted out in heaven? No one, who reflects that this life is a preparatory state, can doubt that our future character will be a continuation of the present, — that, if we enter heaven, we shall carry with us essentially the same minds which we possess on leaving the world, and thus all the peculiarities of earth which are consistent with goodness will be transplanted in the future state. The Scriptures teach us that it will be part of the happiness of heaven to meet there the good and excellent of former times, — the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and other benefactors of mankind. But this happiness would be wholly lost, were men in heaven to lose their peculiar characters, were all to be cast into one mould, were all, in becoming perfect, to become perfectly alike. No, — heaven will not present this unvaried and dull uniformity. The strong lines of character which marked men on earth, we may suppose, will distinguish them hereafter. Paul will retain his ardor,

John his kindness, Isaiah his imagination. In heaven we shall witness every form of intellectual and moral excellence. Some of its inhabitants will exhibit to us the milder, and others the sublimer virtues. Some will be distinguished by glow of feeling, some by profoundness of thought, some by activity and energy of will. There will be, too, different degrees of the same excellence, and different employments corresponding to the character.

"The true view of heaven, that which the Scriptures give, that which reason sanctions, and that which we can most powerfully realize, is, that it will not essentially change, but rather improve, our nature. We shall be the same beings as on earth; we shall retain our present faculties, our present affections, our love of knowledge, love of beauty, love of action, love of approbation, our sympathy, gratitude, and pleasure in success. We shall probably, too, have bodies not very different from what we now have, — the eye to behold creation and receive its beauties, the ear to hear the voice of friendship and to receive the pleasures of harmony, and even sense refined and purified. This we know, that Jesus in a form like ours ascended into heaven, and when Moses and Elijah conversed with him on the Mount, they appeared in the human form, differing from ours only in its splendor; and from these facts it would seem that our future bodies will bear a general resemblance to the present."

1817. HEAVEN A PLACE FOR GROWTH AND ACTION. "In heaven the understanding will be called into vigorous exercise, and will be continually enlarged and improved by exertion. Some persons seem to conceive that the mind will at once attain its full and perfect growth in the future world, that it will ascend immediately from this region of darkness and error into the brightest light of heaven, that it will expand at once to the full extent of its capacities, that every

thing which is to be known will at once be acquired, and therefore that new acquisitions will not be proposed, and will not of course awaken its activity. But this is an imagination altogether unauthorized by Scripture, and it differs so entirely from present experience, that nothing but positive declarations of Scripture can give it a claim to belief. In this life progression is the universal law. Nothing is brought into being in its most perfect state. Every thing rises to maturity from feeble beginnings.

"The all-wise Creator delights in a progressive system, in gradual improvement, not in immediate perfection. It is his uniform method to conduct beings through various stages, not to fix them at once in an unchangeable condition. Now, such being the method of Providence, and such the nature and experience of man, is it not natural to expect that in a future life our nature will be progressive, that the knowledge with which the Christian will commence his future being will be a point from which he will start, a foundation on which he will build, rather than a state in which he will eternally rest?

"Freed from all the passions and prejudices which now darken and disorder his mind, loving the truth with increasing ardor, clothed with a spiritual, vigorous, refined, immortal body, released from all pain, disease, languor, and relaxing toil, and, above all, associated with enlightened and benevolent minds, with angels of light, with apostles, prophets, sages, with Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God, — blest with all these aids and guides, with what rapid steps must the Christian advance in the knowledge of God and of his works! And when we consider that this progression will be eternal, will never end, what an astonishing conception is given us of the future greatness of man! We cannot follow him on his path of glory. To an ever-progressing being no limits can be prescribed. There is no rank of created existence to which he will not ascend.

Where seraphs now worship, there man will one day worship, and the purest praises which heaven now hears will ascend from once human lips. Are there orders of beings whose expansive minds embrace the interests of worlds as easily as we do the concerns of our business and families? The mind of man, continually improving, will enjoy the same expansion. I am lost when I attempt to represent to myself human nature perfected in heaven and through endless ages approaching its wise and holy Creator."

1818. FUTURE RETRIBUTION. "It seems to me that a man of common understanding, reading the Scriptures without any knowledge of the way in which they have been interpreted, would not think it possible that the doctrine should ever have been drawn from them that there is to be no future punishment. Almost any opinion would seem to him to receive greater countenance from the Bible than this. Yet this opinion has found strenuous advocates; and, from its very nature, it has not been advocated without making converts.

"This error should be resisted with earnestness, because it directly, palpably, and without disguise diminishes the restraints on vice. It is at war with society. It is a blow at the root of social order. It lets loose those propensities which are constantly struggling against the principle of duty, and which this principle, unaided by the fear of future suffering, is in multitudes poorly able to restrain. The doctrine I am opposing goes to the very extinction of conscience. Conscience in man is an echo, if I may so speak, to the will and moral sentiments of God. Its dictates are authoritative, because we feel them to be dictates of Him who made us. A sense of God's abhorrence of sin is the chief nourishment of our abhorrence of it. Let God be viewed as so unconcerned about character as not to punish the guiltiest life, as to fall short in his administration of the

plainest requisitions of justice, and a deadly torpor would spread over the human conscience. Moral sensibility would be paralyzed. . . . . .

"The effects of this doctrine, indeed, may not immediately appear, because its very extravagance prevents its being thoroughly believed, because it cannot eradicate the principles of our nature, and cannot entirely efface the impressions of education. Guilt and punishment are seen to have a connection too natural and intimate to be wholly separated even in thought. But whilst the influence of the doctrine may be counteracted by these and other causes, such as natural good dispositions, freedom from great temptation, the power of opinion, and the like, yet its proper effects must be always bad; — its fruits are bitter, its tendency is to sin and death. . . . . .

"On this account, I believe that the Scriptures in great wisdom say nothing of happiness reserved for the guilty after they shall have borne the penalty of their sins. If that happiness be intended for them, I should say that the present life is not the proper time for revealing it. Nothing decisively clear seems to me laid down in the Scriptures upon this subject. A solemn darkness hangs over the prison-house of the condemned. One thing alone is certain, that we shall suffer greatly hereafter, if we live here in neglect of God's known will, his providential aid, his revelation by Christ. In what way we shall suffer, or to what duration and extent, the Scriptures, it seems to me, have not precisely defined, and we need not to know. It is enough to have the impression that a great woe hangs over guilt, and that we can gain nothing, but may lose every thing, by persevering transgression. It is true, as many assert, that the word "everlasting," when applied to punishment, does not necessarily mean without end, and that it is often applied to denote limited duration; but still, that there will be a limit to future punishment, that it will operate to reform us, or

that there will be bounds to the consequences of unfortunate guilt, the Scriptures nowhere declare. God's mercy, if it shall be extended to the impenitent, is not yet revealed. The future is filled with awful gloom to those who are now living without God, and it is but kindness towards them to encourage no delusive hope. Such a hope forms no part of my message, for in my view it makes no part of revelation. The Scriptures show us the wicked banished into darkness. In that exile it leaves them. That darkness hides them from our sight. If mercy is to be extended, it is mercy to be revealed hereafter. It is not to be taken into our account now, in estimating the consequences of sin."

1816. THE FUTURE GLORIES OF THE GOOD. "It is a very interesting view of death, that, instead of destroying, it sets a seal on the virtues of good men, the seal of eternity. It places them beyond danger. It takes them from a region of moral infection, where they sometimes drooped, where temptation triumphs over the most experienced in piety, where the purest excellence can hardly be viewed without feelings of solicitude.

"When we think of the good and holy who have left us, we should banish from our thoughts all gloomy images which death presents. They should rise before our minds, improved, perfected, clothed with a new lustre of goodness. We should think of them as ascended to a purer region. The countenance on which we were accustomed to see the expression of all kind affections should shine upon us brightened with a more benignant smile. Their piety should appear as raised, refined, and kindled into purer ardor by its near approach to God. We should see them surrounded with better friends and examples than those they have left, and in the midst of the purest and happiest society.

"That in this wide creation there are spheres of nobler action than are enjoyed on earth, that there are wider fields

for the powers of intelligent beings, and more generous and glorious objects for benevolence, who can doubt? This world, it is not unlikely, is the abode of the feeblest and most imperfect members of God's family. It is, perhaps, the sphere of the humblest labor. Nowhere, perhaps, do intelligent beings enjoy, expand, so little. Go where we will in creation, if we except the abode of the condemned, probably we shall find more improved intelligence, and wider spheres of usefulness. Our present experience teaches us that God delights in an active creation. We see all nature in motion. We see that he delights in accomplishing his most important ends by the agency of his rational creatures, and that thus their concurrence with the creation forms at once their happiness and dignity. Who can doubt that this same principle regulates the whole universe which God has made, that everywhere his purposes are committed to the charge of creatures, that all spaces and ages are one vast field of exertion? Among the chief wonders and glories which the future world is to disclose to us will be the enlarged powers, relations, and influences of virtuous beings.

"Let us not, then, imagine that the usefulness of the good is finished at death. Then rather does it begin. Let us not judge of their state by associations drawn from the chillness and silence of the grave. They have gone to abodes of life, of warmth, of action. They have gone to fill a larger place in the system of God. Death has expanded their powers. The clogs and fetters of the perishable body have fallen off, that they may act more freely and with more delight in the grand system of creation. We should represent them to our minds as ascended to a higher rank of existence, and admitted to coöperate with far higher communities. This earth was only their school, their place of education, where we saw their powers comparatively in an infant state. They have now reached a maturer age, and are gone to sustain more important relations. They have been called

because their agency was needed in higher services than those of this world. Where they are now acting, it is not given to us to know; but the all-wise Father can never be without a sphere for the virtues of his children. It would be grateful to believe that their influence reaches to the present state, and we certainly are not forbidden to indulge the hope. But wherever they may be, they are more useful, more honorably occupied, than when on earth; and by following their steps, we may, however separated from them during life, hope to obtain admission into the same bright regions where they are pressing onward to perfection."

## SECTION SECOND.

### HUMAN NATURE.

1815. GENEROUS VIEWS OF MAN. "We need to feel more deeply that we are intrusted with a religion which is designed to ennoble human nature, which recognizes in man the capacities of all that is good, great, and excellent, and which offers every encouragement and aid to the pursuit of perfection. The Christian minister, in preparing his discourses, should often recollect, that man, degraded as he frequently appears, has yet powers and faculties which may be refined into angelic perfection, that he is invited to prepare for the community of angels, that he is formed for endless progress in intellectual and moral excellence and felicity. He should often recollect that in Jesus Christ our nature has been intimately united with the Divine, and that in Jesus Humanity is already enthroned in heaven. Familiarized to these generous conceptions, it should often be his object in preaching to unfold to men their capacities of greatness, to reveal the splendor of that destiny to which they are called by Jesus Christ, to awaken aspirations after a nobler character and a higher existence, and to inflame them with the love of all the graces and virtues with which Jesus

came to enrich and adorn human nature. In this way he will prove that he understands the true and great design of the gospel and the ministry, which is the perfection of man's character. . . . . .

"May I be permitted to say, that perhaps the greatest defect in the ministry, as at present conducted, is, that it is not sufficiently directed to ennoble and elevate the minds of men. It does not breathe a sufficiently generous spirit. It does not appeal sufficiently to the highest and best principles of the human heart, nor delineate with sufficient frequency and energy those lofty sentiments and deeds to which something congenial responds in almost every breast. It appeals too constantly to the lowest principle of man's nature, — I mean the principle of fear, which, under judicious excitement, is indeed of undoubted use, but which, as every parent knows, when habitually awakened, is always found to depress and debase the mind, to break the spirit, to give a tameness to the character, and to chill the best affections. Perhaps one cause of the limited influence of Christianity is, that, as Christianity is too often exhibited, it seems adapted to form an abject, servile character, rather than to raise its disciples to true greatness and dignity. Perhaps, were Christianity more habitually regarded as a system whose chief design it is to infuse honorable sentiments, an ingenuous love of God, a superiority to unworthy pursuits, a virtue akin to that of heaven, its reception would be more cordial, and its influence more extensive, more happy, more accordant with its great end, — the perfection of human nature."

1816. MAN'S CAPACITIES OF GOODNESS. "One of the great characteristics of the present day is a lowness, a sordidness, a frigidness of thought and feeling. Men think meanly of their nature, and hence their conduct is selfish and earthly. We do not, indeed, see men in general given

up to gross vices. We do not meet around us the ferocity or beastly licentiousness of the savage state. We find many marks of improvement, when we compare the present with earlier ages. But there is little elevation of sentiment. Comparatively few seem to be conscious of their high original, their capacities of excellence, their relation to God, their interest in eternity.

"Blessed be God, in the history of every age and nation, amidst the ravages of ambition and the mean aims of selfishness, there have broken forth nobler sentiments, and the evidences of a heavenly virtue. Every age has been illustrated by men who bore themselves like men, and vindicated the cause of human nature, — men who in circumstances of great trial have adhered to moral and religious principle, to the cause of persecuted truth, to the interests of humanity, to the hope of immortality, — who have trodden under foot the fairest gifts of fortune and the world in the pursuit of duty. It has often pleased God to gather round these men the clouds of adversity, that their virtues might shine with a sublimer splendor. This is the greatest value of history, that it introduces us to persons of this illustrious order; and its noblest use is by their examples to nourish in us a conviction that elevated purity of motive and conduct is not a dream of fancy, but that it is placed within our reach, and is the very end of being.

"I have spoken of history as refuting the low conceptions which men form of their nature; but, without looking back to former ages, may not every individual, amidst the corruptions of present society, discover in his own sphere some delightful examples and illustrations of human goodness? Does he not discern some whose names are never to be inscribed on the rolls of earthly fame, and who can boast no distinction of intelligence or station, but whose sincere devotedness to God, whose gratitude in adversity, whose patience under injury, whose cheerful discharge of humble

duties, whose unwearied zeal in doing good, afford a delightful proof of the connection between the human and angelic nature? Let none, then, say that the corruptions of society forbid us to believe that our nature is susceptible of high advancement. The road to perfection is not unexplored. We have forerunners in this path. We see the traces of many steps directed to immortality. Men of like passions with ourselves have subdued temptation. The good and great were not miracles in the moral world. We possess the same power, the same motives, the same heavenly guide, and the same promise of Divine assistance. . . . . .

"He who never looks up to an excellence higher than he has attained, who never regards himself as formed for pure and generous sentiments, who never admits the thought that exalted goodness is placed within his reach, will never put forth his powers in pursuit of virtue. He will never rise. He dooms himself to his present state. Exertion supposes that good may be attained, and vigorous exertion supposes that the mind is kindled by the prospect of great attainments. What can you expect from him who sees nothing in the future better than the past? On the other hand, a belief in the capacities and dignity of humanity, a belief of its future glory, a belief that higher excellence is the very end for which we were made, is a spring of generous and unwearied activity. This faith, when deeply fixed in the mind, is a pledge and earnest of the improvement to which it aspires. It awakens new power in the soul. It gives a natural dignity to the thoughts and actions, and produces an almost involuntary abstinence from all that is false and selfish.

"He who accustoms himself to reflect on Jesus Christ, on his apostles, on martyrs, on the best of men, on the loveliest and sublimest forms of humanity, who regards these high beings as his forerunners in the path of glory, and whose chief prayer is that he may walk in their steps,—

this man has learned the true secret of greatness. Though on earth, he has taken his place in a higher world. Blessed be God, these consoling and encouraging views are not only authorized by the gospel, but Jesus Christ came for this very end, to fix them in our minds, to make them the rule of our lives. His great object was to exalt us to true glory. His example was placed before us, not to create a transient emotion, but to show us to what height our nature may be raised."

1818. FORCE OF MORAL PURPOSE. "The Christian is known by the energy with which he wills to do right. It is his distinction, that his sense of religious duty, his moral principles, his purposes of virtue, predominate within him. He does not merely love what is good, but chooses it with power.

"We hear often of greatness of character. The only true greatness consists in unconquerable purpose of obedience to God. It consists in adhering with energy and courage to truth, duty, and honor. It consists in taking our rules of action from our own minds, enlightened by revelation, and following our deliberate convictions of right in the face of death and danger. It consists in asking ourselves, first, not what is expedient or safe, but what is generous, excellent, and acceptable to God; and in forming purposes of rectitude with a force which man and time and suffering cannot subdue. This holy energy of mind is the only true greatness, and it is a greatness not beyond the reach of our nature. . . . . .

"The truly interesting portions of history are those which attest the moral power of man, which show us fellow-beings sustained by inward principle and confidence in God under the heaviest pressure of pain, which show us the mind unchanged in prosperity and adversity, passing unmoved through honor and disgrace, clinging to excellence when

her only earthly dowry was death. Would we see our nature in its greatness, we must see it forsaken by all outward aids, compassed with obstacles, yet steadfast, gathering power from difficulty, and opposing a firmer front in proportion to the violence with which its principles are assailed.

"The true use of the trials and temptations of life, and of the turbulent passions in our own breasts, is to call forth spiritual energy and heroic purposes. God might have placed us in a world where duty and pleasure would have mingled and formed one current; but where would have been the discipline of virtue in such a world? Under such a constitution of things, our nature would have been free from sin; but whilst every stain would have been prevented, almost every bright trace of moral glory would have been dim. The crown would have fallen from the head of goodness. We are otherwise circumstanced; — we are placed now in a region of storms, perils, hardships; now in one of blandishments, seduction, snares. In such a world, would we be virtuous and make progress in religion, we must put forth our powers to choose the good and to love it entirely. The conscience must act with vigor. Excellence must be pursued earnestly. An inert purpose will avail us nothing. Our whole nature must be awake. Who does not see that such a world is fitted to form a higher order of minds than a state removed from temptation? True, we must toil, but the harvest is rich. We must fight, but the strength we gain by conflict is an inestimable compensation. Here we have one explanation of our present state. We are tried as by fire, that we may come forth purer from the furnace. Our virtues are in peril, that we may hold them with a firmer grasp. This is the world for the formation of generous and resolute spirits. Let its purpose be in us fully accomplished. . . . . .

"This force of principle gives, as it were, new power to

the whole man. With this inward spring how much can we accomplish, how much endure! Sustained by a consciousness of rectitude, difficulties no longer daunt us, and hindrances sink before us. The minds of men are exceedingly weakened by inconsistent passions, by fear, interest, regard to opinion. They effect little, because they want *unity*. He who is accustomed to ask what is right, and to espouse it with energy, leaving the consequences with God, derives new power from his singleness of purpose. It gives him fearlessness of mind. His faculties, concentrated on his duties, act freely and strenuously; he perseveres where others would droop, and succeeds where they would fail. Right action, by being in itself simple and harmonious, brings an immediate reward in peace, equanimity, steadiness. Strong moral principle is a spring of honorable impulse, and gives us the highest use of all our faculties. . . . . .

"Force of moral purpose makes us happy. Happiness does not consist, as men are too apt to imagine, in passive enjoyments. It is found in the strenuous use of our best affections. We enjoy most in putting forth our whole nature, in being fully alive to all scenes and relations, and especially in preserving our noblest faculties in healthy and efficient activity. There is a constant satisfaction attending the vigorous exercise of conscience, while a feeble operation of the moral principle, which shows us what is right, but gives no strength to perform it, is a source of constant misery. There is an exhilaration, a hope, a joy, springing up within us when we *will* with power what we see to be good, when we are conscious of treading under foot the low principles and interests which would part us from God and duty, when we sacrifice firmly and unreservedly selfish desires or the world's favor to the claims of Christian rectitude. Moral energy inspires an unconquerable resolution, and fills us with a rare delight. The mind enlarges itself, and gains

a new feeling of its capacities and destination, in these seasons of generous excitement; just as the body seems to gather new height and dimensions when a person is upborne by an exalted sentiment. The most exulting moments of life are those when, after a conflict of strong passion with the sense of duty, we come off conquerors, and are conscious that we have risen in spiritual existence. A feeling of this nature becomes in a degree habitual to the man whose general tone of mind is a sincere purpose of adhering to the path of Christian virtue."

1816. SOURCES OF HAPPINESS. "The fatal error of multitudes is, that they hope to escape their present discontented, uneasy state of mind by improving their outward circumstances. They will not see that the spring of misery is within, that it is not in the power of all earthly objects combined to give them peace, until their minds are purified, their passions governed; until they have made their peace with God, and can look forward with some well-grounded hope to futurity. But though this error is a very common one, yet I cannot conceive a more obvious truth than this, that it is not the circumstances which surround a man, but the thoughts and feelings which are most familiar to his mind, on which his satisfaction depends. The true question as to happiness is not 'Where am I? In what state or rank do I exist?' but 'To what end is my mind directed? What objects have acquired the control of my affections?' . . . . .

"Life is designed to form and prove our characters, to call forth our powers, to bring our virtues into acts, to put to the test our moral and religious principles, and thus to prepare us for higher states of being. *Happiness is God's end;* but it is future, not immediate, happiness, — a happiness for which the foundation is to be laid in present improvement, which we are to earn by exertion, self-denial, and the vol-

untary exercise and habitual cultivation of the best affections of which our nature is capable."

1814. TRUE HAPPINESS. "The true happiness of man has its seat in the mind which God has breathed into us, in the enlargement of its powers, in the elevation of its sentiments, in the firmness and purity of its principles, in its ascent to its native heaven. Compared with the capacities of this imperishable principle, and with the means of unfolding and exalting it, every thing outward is worthless.

"The best of all the blessings which God gives to man is a heart alive to what is great and good, which glows at the sight of excellence, and kindles with desire to become one with what it admires. The best of all God's blessings is a heart which is accustomed to aspire to him as its source and destination, which is alive to his all-pervading presence, which meets him in his works, converses with him in solitude, blesses him in affliction, prays to him with the assurance of being heard, and hopes from him all which infinite goodness can bestow. The best of all blessings is a heart which partakes God's benevolence, which feels its relation to the universe, which is bound by friendship to the good, by sympathy to the afflicted, and by an overflowing tenderness to the narrow circle of domestic life. The best of all blessings is a heart which carries with it a consciousness of its unbounded destiny, which looks forward to eternity as its inheritance, which hopes for perfect goodness, which feels alliance with higher orders of beings, and anticipates a union with the spirits of the just made perfect, with departed friends, and with the ascended Saviour. In such a state of heart is the true happiness of man."

1814. PERFECT SOCIETY. "Perfect social happiness is reserved for a higher stage of existence. Fill as you ought

your relations here, and you will rise to a better world, and be welcomed into a happier and purer community. But this is not all. It is very doubtful whether we should be the happier, if our social connections were at present improved as much as we desire. We desire friends who will regard us with unremitting tenderness, in whose society we shall escape from every temptation, who would fly to our aid in every difficulty, to our rescue in every danger. The thought of such friends is indeed delightful; but in the present life we are not worthy of them, and I fear they would injure us by the very excess of their tenderness. They would probably keep us all our lives in a state of infantile dependence. Relying always on their aid, and shielded always by their care, we should attain no firmness of character, no courage, no proper self-dependence."

1821. TRUE BENEVOLENCE IS JUSTICE TO MAN'S WHOLE NATURE. "Man is not mere spirit, and that benevolence which should regard him as such, and in its zeal for his mind neglect entirely his outward comfort, would be even more injudicious than that which spends itself exclusively in relieving animal suffering. True charity regards the *whole nature* of the being whom it would assist. Man's animal wants we must never neglect, under pretence of a refined and spiritual kindness which can look at no good below the mind.

"But, on the other hand, we must not stop at securing outward good. For it is true that it is the mind which specially constitutes the man; and although want may be relieved, yet nothing worthy the name of happiness is communicated, unless the mind be benefited. One great reason why benevolence has not done more good is, that it has been too superficial, has confined itself too much to outward benefits, has not regarded man sufficiently as an intellectual and moral being, nor inquired how the welfare of such a

being is to be advanced. And we can easily explain why kindness has thus preferred to labor for the outward and bodily, rather than the inward and spiritual, good of men; for benefits of the first class are promoted more easily and suddenly than those of the last, and are more apparent to the eye. We can see at once the effects of our bounty, when we put raiment on the naked, or give a shelter to those who are suffering from the cold. The care spent on the minds of the ignorant and bad does not yield so ready a harvest. The process of growth in the mind is not only unseen, but slow; and yet how permanent are the fruits of its culture! . . . . .

"God's best gifts are those which he diffuses silently; and so it is with man's. The secret influence of a good man's example, and of a wise man's intelligence, which raises insensibly the hearts and minds of the circle and community in which they move, is worth more than any efforts of outward benevolence, though they might escape the notice of all except profound and judicious observers. . . . . .

"The noblest benevolence is that which operates on the mind, which seeks the happiness of men by contributing to their intellectual and moral advancement; and this is a great work, for the mind is a complex organization, having various powers, capacities, affections, and the true happiness of a man consists in the development of all. The mind is a whole as truly as the body; its health consists in a general action and progress, and it suffers from a partial culture as really, though not as sensibly, as the body would suffer, if we were to aim to strengthen a single limb, and leave the other parts to pine. Man consists of reason, conscience, affection, will, and active powers, and all must conspire to form an harmonious, happy existence. The kindness which seeks to call them *all* forth is at once the most laborious and the most divine.

"These glorious capacities of human nature have as yet

been but imperfectly unfolded; nor has the full development of them been made very much an object. In vast numbers of men, I may say in the great majority, the higher faculties on which happiness chiefly rests are almost locked up, and those who possess them have no consciousness of the immense resources, the divine gifts, which they carry in their hearts. Were we to visit a country where the greatest number of people were blind, deaf, palsied, we should look on them with deep compassion; but to a reflecting man, a large part of the world now exhibits a scarcely less afflicting sight. Human nature is everywhere seen blind, deaf, palsied, as far as its highest and best faculties are concerned. . . . . .

"The idea of advancing men's happiness by such an extensive development and improvement of the moral and intellectual powers of human nature, as has now been suggested, may seem impracticable. But experience has already demonstrated that much more intelligence can be spread through all classes than was once thought possible; and no man, who compares the world now with former periods, can doubt that a vastly larger measure of knowledge, clearer and nobler ideas of duty, and higher views of religion, than are now met with, except in persons of the very first order of minds and the purest character, can gradually be thrown into general circulation, and infused into men's minds through all classes of society. *Society grows as truly as the individual*, and is becoming ripe for higher instructions than were given in its childhood. We are too apt to settle down in the present state of things, as if it were immutable, as if human nature had reached its ultimate point of progression, when in fact the springs of human improvement gain strength by use, and every advance makes future ones more easy. Revelation encourages the most generous hopes and efforts, for it clearly points to a higher condition of the human race than has yet been

reached; and that this is to be promoted by man's instrumentality, God's past dispensations compel us to believe."

1814. HAPPINESS OF PROGRESS. "Progression and happiness are intimately connected. To rise perpetually to virtue by our own exertions, to look back on the path through which we have ascended, to raise an eye of hope to brighter eminences, — these constitute a higher felicity than perpetual uniformity of any mode of bliss. Now, if progression thus heightens happiness, is there not an advantage in beginning existence in our present very low condition? Were I to indulge myself in conjecture, I should imagine that archangels commenced their course in circumstances as humble as our own, so great appears to me the joy of progress and contrast, of passing through successive stages of existence, of gathering the knowledge which each furnishes, and of experiencing the providence of God which all conspire to illustrate. Thus our present imperfection is no objection to Divine goodness. . . . . .

"We often hear complaints of the feebleness, darkness, and errors of the human mind. 'Why are we not introduced at once to all the truth which we are capable of receiving?' it is asked. Now, that ignorance is in some respects an evil is granted. But we should remember, that, were every thing known to us at first, all pleasure of discovery would be at an end. The charm of novelty would fade and vanish. The mind could only revolve familiar ideas. Are we sure that we should be gainers in the end? To our ignorance we owe the delight of surprise, the ardor of curiosity, the fresh wonders of early instruction, and the satisfaction of continually adding, if we please, to our store of knowledge. We are ignorant; but what a magnificent school is the creation in which our Father has placed us! How much is there on every side to learn, and what motives and aids are given us to the enlargement of our views!

1815. INDICATIONS OF IMMORTALITY. "In the inexhaustible love of knowledge which animates the human understanding we have a bright indication of the reality of a future existence. God has given to man a spirit which is evidently designed to expand through the universe, which disdains the confinement of space, and which, although for ages it has been making progress in the knowledge of nature, still thirsts for more extended information. There is a restlessness in the human mind which no acquisition can allay. Thought is for ever enlarging its horizon.

"Were man destined to live only in this world, his desires and powers would have been fitted wholly for this world, and his capacities would have been limited to the means of present enjoyment. But his faculties are now continually overleaping the bounds of earth; he delights in discoveries which have no relation to his existence on this planet; he calls to his aid the arts, not merely to render life comfortable, but to assist him in the most remote researches; invents instruments which extend his sight beyond these visible heavens, and reveal hidden stars and systems; and presses on and on to fathom the profoundest secrets of the universe. The human mind has an intense delight in what is vast and unexplored. Does such a mind carry with it no proof that it is destined to wider spheres of experience than earth affords, — that it is designed to improve for ever in the knowledge of God's wonderful works?

"In man's power of looking forward with hope to distant and everlasting ages we have a second clear mark of a being destined to another existence. Were this world every thing to man, his longings would not stray beyond its brief span. His anticipations would be proportioned to his being. Of what use, except to torment him, would be the idea of eternity to a creature of time? Why kindle in man the sublime sentiment of immortality, if the grave is to be his doom? . . . . .

"Our capacity of knowing God is another indication that we are appointed to future modes of being. The human mind is not limited to objects of sense. It has a relish for the unseen. It for ever tends to rise from the effect to the cause, from creation to its Author. This tendency may be pronounced one of the essential, instinctive principles of our nature.

"Nor is this desire of acquaintance with God slight and transient. The human mind, by cultivation of pious sentiments, may be, and often has been, raised to an intimate union with the Divine Being, to a vivid feeling of his presence, to an habitual discernment of him in his works and providence. It has attained to sentiments of sacred rapture, to more than earthly joy, in praising, adoring, thanking him; and just in proportion as the heart is the abode of these generous emotions, it desires a nearer approach to the Divinity, and longs for an improved condition in which He may be worshipped with pure and perfect love. When a mind has thus become alive to God, it clings to existence with increasing earnestness. It cannot endure the thought of being blotted out from among God's works, — of being deprived of the consciousness of his perfections, — of losing for ever his friendship, — of rendering him no more service. Piety necessarily takes this form of desire for near communion with the Infinite Being in a future, better, endless existence; and what do all these aspirations indicate?

"We have another indication of man's future life in the moral sensibility which God has imparted to the soul.

"The human mind, notwithstanding its degradation, has something in it congenial with excellence. It delights to hear and read of angelic worth and greatness of character. It loves to conceive of more perfect forms of human nature than real life exhibits. To this propensity poetry and fiction are indebted for their origin. Especially when the

mind has been refined by the practice of goodness, does it naturally represent to itself a beauty of virtue such as has never been attained on earth. It is dissatisfied with all that it has gained and pants for greater purity. Its very improvements prompt it to desire a better existence, where present stains and imperfections will be done away, where it will fill a wider sphere of usefulness, where it may be united with the excellent whom it loves, and become worthy of their friendship. This delight in goodness, this thirst for perfection with which the human mind is instinct, is full of promise. Were this life every thing to us, would God have formed us thus capable of conceiving and desiring heights of excellence which in this life are unattainable? Will he crush the hope of moral progress to which our very virtues give intenseness? . . . . .

"The man of refinement and sensibility finds himself as it were in accordance with universal nature. Every scene, every season, touches some spring in his heart. The stream, the mountain, the ocean, the clouds, the distant constellations, all speak to him in a language that he understands. There is something in him akin to all this beauty and sublimity, which gives him a claim to property in the whole creation. There is especially in the soul a sensibility to the grand, awful scenes of nature. Whatever bears the impress of infinite majesty, whatever is too vast to be grasped by the senses, brings to the heart a mysterious delight. The storm, the thunder, and raging ocean, fearful as they are, still awaken a solemn pleasure, for they speak to us of almighty power, and accord with our love of greatness. Now this sensibility to whatever is great and fair in universal nature seems to attest the glory of the human soul, and to point out to it a sublime destiny. Why has God placed man amidst this boundless theatre, revealed around him this endless creation, touched his heart with the love of beauty, and given him this delightful and awful interest in all

that meets his eye, if he is merely a creature of the earth, soon to shut his eyes on these majestic scenes, and to be buried for ever in a narrow grave? Does this love of the infinite, this attachment to the universe, seem suitable to so frail a nature? Do they not suggest the idea of a being who belongs to the universe, and who is to fill an ever-widening sphere? . . . . .

"I now proceed to another and a more decisive indication of a future life, which is furnished us by human nature. I refer to the capacity which man actually possesses of attaining to greatness of character.

"Whilst man falls far below the perfection he desires, he yet is sometimes seen to ascend to a sublimity of virtue which does honor to our nature, and proves that it is formed for heaven. We shall discover in history persons not merely faithful in their regard to the prescribed duties of life, but who are filled with a grand disinterestedness of character, a sublime goodness, which outstrips what is positively demanded, which is prodigal of service to God and man, and overflows with sacrifices and sufferings in the cause of duty.

"These great examples show us what man may become, and what he is designed to be. These are lineaments of a noble nature, marks of a sublime capacity, a sublime destiny. We all have sometimes seen our nature manifested in these honorable forms, have seen great temptations and calamities calling forth great virtues, have seen the human countenance bright with the expression of magnanimous affections, and have felt how lovely and how glorious may be humanity. And can we believe that the soul of man, gifted with such capacities, is created for a day? Can we think that the great men who have thrown such light on the past were but meteors, extinguished as soon as kindled, — extinguished in the midst of their glory? Why were such sublime capacities given to a being of such an

humble destiny? Does the all-wise Creator thus waste his noblest gifts, and is he so unconcerned for those on whom these gifts have been conferred? It is a natural sentiment, entitled to respect, that exalted goodness cannot perish. It is fitted for a better world than this, and the Creator would be dishonored were his noblest work to be lost. Nature may pass away, but can goodness, sublime goodness, that image of God, be destroyed? And if human nature be capable of this goodness, is it not destined to immortality?

"Another indication of a future state suggested by our nature is to be found in the triumph which man often obtains over death, in the manner in which he passes through the last change.

"To the sensible appearances of death, so sad and appalling, we should do well to oppose the energy of soul with which it is often encountered. Then death itself will furnish us with a proof of immortality. Sometimes the hour of death is an hour of peculiar glory for human nature. Instead of being conquered, man is seen to conquer the last foe; and he seems to suffer only that the greatness of humanity may be developed. In instances like these, the last act of the soul is an assertion of its immortality. Can we believe that this moment of sublime virtue is the moment of annihilation, — that the soul is extinguished when its beauty is most resplendent? If God intended that death should be an eternal extinction, would it be adorned, as it often is, with a radiance of the noblest, loveliest sentiments and affections of our nature? Would the greatest triumph of man be the harbinger of his ruin?

"There is another view yet more sublime. I refer to the death of the martyr to religion, to his country, to the cause of truth and human improvement. You have read of men who preferred death to desertion of duty. They encountered the menaces of power, they endured the gloom of prisons, and at length, in the fulness of their powers,

were led to the place of execution. Their steps never faltered, their purpose never trembled, their looks were firm, yet mild and forgiving, and with unshaken trust in God they counted it an honor to suffer in his cause. And what now shall we say of death? That it triumphed over these men of unsubdued virtue, — that it quenched these bright spirits? Or shall we rather say that it was designed to illustrate the immortal energy of piety and virtue, and to show that the faithful soul is more than conqueror over the last foe? Can we think that God impels those who love him by the best principle in their nature to encounter death in its most dreadful forms, and then abandons them to final extinction at the very moment when they must be to him most worthy of his love?

"We find another indication of immortality in our nature, when we consider the principal source of human enjoyment. I ask, then, what is this principal source of human enjoyment?

"A slight observation will teach us that happiness is derived chiefly from activity, from conscious growth, from the successful effort to improve our powers, from rising by our own energy to an improved condition. It is not what we have already gained, be it knowledge, property, reputation, or virtue, which constitutes our happiness, so much as the exertion of our faculties in further acquisitions. The idea of advancement is of all others the most congenial with the human mind. We delight not so much in possession as in pursuit, not so much in holding the prize as in pressing forward to seize it with the eye of hope. The feeling of progress is the great spring of happiness; and it is this which gives cheerfulness and animation under the severest lot.

"Now what does such a nature indicate? Is it true that man's chief happiness consists in animated pursuit, in consciousness of improvement, — that, when his advancement is

most swift and sure, this principle most prompts him to press forward? Is not *perfection*, then, the end of his being? Is he not made to advance, to ascend, for ever? and does not this soaring nature discover a being designed for a forever brightening career? Would this insatiable thirst for progress have been given to a creature of a day, whose powers are to perish just when beginning to unfold, and whose attainments are to be buried with him in eternal oblivion? . . . . .

"If this world were our home and our only portion, should we have sentiments implanted by our Creator which teach us to live above it, and impel us to feel that it is noble to renounce it? Were this our only sphere of enjoyment, could we ever deem it beneath us, unworthy our nature?

"But this is not all; we not only honor men when they rise above the world, its pleasures and gains, — we particularly revere them when they hold life itself with a degree of indifference, when they disdain it in comparison with principle, and advance to meet seeming destruction by a resolute and unshaken adherence to principle. On the other hand, we feel a contempt for those who cling to life as the best of blessings. We cannot endure the coward, while we are lenient even towards the excess of courage. We view with admiration the man who is prodigal of life in an honorable cause, and who prefers death to the least stain of guilt. Now these feelings surely indicate that the present is not our whole existence. Were this life every thing to us, should we be so constituted as to consider the voluntary relinquishment of it as the noblest deed? Should we have feelings which impel us to cast it away? Were death entire and eternal extinction of all our power and virtue, would the welcoming of it appear the height of glory? All these feelings which I have considered, and which prompt us to sacrifice the world and life to the purity of the soul, are so many attestations from God to the dignity of the soul, so many assur-

ances that it is destined for higher relations than those which it now sustains to the body and the world."

1814. GREATNESS OF HUMAN NATURE, AS REVEALED BY JESUS CHRIST. "Consider the discoveries which Jesus Christ has made of the glory of human nature. His gospel may be said to be *a revelation of man to himself.* It calls us home to our own hearts, and there discloses to us capacities which should awaken the profoundest gratitude and admiration. The great unhappiness of men is, that they live abroad, they lose themselves in the accidents around, they are engrossed by outward events, by the changes of the natural or political world. They do not explore the grander world within.

"Jesus Christ thought nothing worthy of his notice but the soul of man; and the whole tone of his gospel is, that the soul is capable of all that is great and excellent, that it may become the image of God, that it may ascend to the glory and purity of angels. It is constantly his doctrine, that man is appointed to join the society of heaven, and that he will there shine as the sun, that he will exchange his present imperfection for spotless purity. As in the child we view the future man, so in man we are taught by the gospel to view the germ of the future angel. We are taught that there is no height of excellence in the universe to which the human mind in the progress of eternity may not attain. These are views which have little to interest him who never reflects on his inward nature, who only feels that he has a body and organs of sense, and who thinks the highest happiness is to be found in the gratifications of the brute. But there are those who feel conscious of the heavenly principle within them, who, at the sight of distinguished virtue, pant to attain to its resemblance, who kindle at the thought of a boundless progression, of a never-ending ascent towards God. To such persons how delightful is the confirmation

which the gospel gives to the wishes and aspirations of their better nature! What a splendor is thrown round human nature, when it is thus viewed as the future associate of all that is most excellent in heaven, as the bright reflection of the glorious goodness of the Creator!"

## SECTION THIRD.

### CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY

1815. THE END OF CHRISTIANITY. "This idea, that the great end of Christianity, of the mission of Jesus, is to exalt the human character, although it runs through the Scriptures, has been very much overlooked. Christians have been inclined to believe that Christ lived and died to influence the mind of God, rather than the mind of man, — to make God favorable to us, rather than to make us obedient to God.

"I cannot but believe that this is a very erroneous view, and utterly unauthorized by the Scriptures. The Scriptures, I think, lead us to believe that holiness, or excellence of character, is a vastly greater blessing than pardon or forgiveness. According to the Scriptures, it is a greater privilege to be delivered from the polluting power than from the consequences of sin. According to the Scriptures, holiness, goodness, virtue, is the pearl of great price. It is God himself dwelling in the human heart. It is heaven enjoyed on earth.

"There is no happiness but in goodness. This is the felicity of God, and this is the best gift he imparts to his creatures. The noblest work of God is a holy, pure, virtuous mind; and Jesus Christ can perform no ministry more noble than the recovering of a sinful mind to a heavenly state."

1817. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. "Our religion demands of us not merely single acts and feelings, but a character or

general frame of mind. We must have Christ's *spirit*, which means his temper; or, in other words, we must have an habitual state of the soul answering to our Lord's. . . . . .

"The great principle which runs through and binds together all parts of the Christian system is this, — that our happiness, our eternal happiness, depends on the character we form. Men are very apt to forget that in every thing but religion they estimate one another, not by occasional acts, but by the general frame of the mind. There is such a thing, we all know, as *character*, something very different from particular actions and occasional feelings, something prominent in the mind, and which works itself into almost all the life. Character is not something which we put on at one moment and put off at another, not something reserved for great occasions, or which appears only in striking actions. It influences the common decisions of the judgment. It gives a peculiar form to the common opinions and purposes of the individual, and, still more, it pervades the whole mind. . . . . .

"Jesus Christ did not come to work upon the surface of the human heart, but to pervade it with his religion; he did not come to inculcate transient feelings and actions, but to implant permanent principles, to give a new life to the soul. It is well, it is necessary, that we should know the large demands of his gospel, so as not to lose its blessings by stopping at low attainments, — so as to propose seriously the acquisition of that devout, benevolent, and heavenly temper which is the very essence of his religion. We cannot be too sensible that to be a Christian is a great work. If we do not rightly estimate the difficulties of our task, how can we apply to it with perseverance, resolution, spirit, and success? We have to incorporate Christian principles into our very souls. We have an inward conflict to sustain, a glorious change to accomplish, by God's assistance, in that mind which is most properly ourselves."

1819. CHRIST'S HUMBLE MODE OF LIFE. "We represent Jesus Christ to ourselves as the most august being who ever moved on the earth. He is separated in our thoughts from all other men. His unparalleled birth, his cross, his resurrection, his ascension, and his future glorious appearing to judge the world are all blended in our minds; and when we read a passage in his history, it is this peculiar being, in whom so many splendors meet, and whose humanity is lost in his superhuman power and exaltation, who speaks, acts, and makes himself known to us. In this way we forget how he really appeared to his contemporaries. It is true, we speak of his poverty. We hear that moving declaration, — 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head'; still, the imagination is too accustomed to other views to conceive of the truth clearly and with force.

"I suspect, too, that we are most of us influenced more or less by the representations which painters have given of the events of Christ's life. In these our Master is placed before us with a glory round his head, in a flowing and often splendid robe, his countenance singularly fair, as if the rough winds had not visited it, and his attitude studiously majestic and commanding. In other words, the artist labors to represent in Jesus ideal beauty and grandeur. Through the eye the imagination is more influenced than by reading. Our conceptions of the Saviour when on earth are taken from such delineations. But the views of Jesus which are very plainly given us in the New Testament present an image of his appearance very different from what our imaginations, aided by these outward delineations, usually form. Let us see the facts as they were, by means of a familiar illustration. Suppose, then, my friends, that there should appear on our exchange a young man of thirty years of age, in the dress of a laborer, from an obscure and distant village, accompanied by a small number of peasants

and fishermen, to whose houses he was in the habit of repairing for food and lodging. I would have you bring this illustration home. It will help you to conceive of the impression made by Jesus, especially at first sight, on those who personally knew him."

1817. Love for Jesus Christ. "There is a wonderful combination of affecting circumstances in the history of Jesus Christ. His original glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, his humiliation in taking on him human nature, his unbounded attachment to mankind, the sustained labor of his life, the patience of his sufferings, his unconquerable love amidst ingratitude and outrage, his blood shed for us, and his sublime triumphs over death,—these are elements which combine to form the loveliest and most exalted character toward which human thought was ever turned. History and society offer us individuals marked by high virtues, and the happiness of conversing with and loving them is among our most exquisite enjoyments. But Jesus leaves behind him at an immeasurable distance the great and good of this world, whether we regard the vastness of his purposes, or the disinterestedness and fervor of his benevolence. It is a great excellence of the gospel, that it reveals to us such a character as Jesus. Its blessings are heightened by flowing to us through a friend and deliverer so suited to awake our best sensibilities. The Christian finds in Jesus Christ a source of perpetual delight. No history interests him like the gospel. His heart often burns as he reads the labors, and sufferings, and virtues of his Lord. How often does his mind turn with a mixture of tenderness and admiration to his cross, and with what delight does he welcome him risen from the dead! He thinks of heaven with a new interest as the place where he shall meet his friend and express to him his thankfulness. . . . . .

"The Christian, conversing with an excellence descended from heaven, which is untainted by the sordidness and imperfection of all human virtue, acquires a relish for eminent purity; instructed as he is, that this lovely model is placed before him for the very purpose of forming him to perfection, he cannot be satisfied without a consciousness of approaching it. . . . . .

"The Christian finds a holy life accompanied by a peculiar pleasure. It is a life not urged on him by a stranger, or by an equal, but by the voice of a heavenly friend. The Sermon on the Mount is not merely a collection of admirable precepts, but the affectionate exhortation of his crucified, risen, and glorified Redeemer. The difficulties of obedience are mitigated, self-denial is sweetened, by the consideration that he is following such a master.

"These remarks show the erroneousness of a sentiment which has sometimes been expressed, and has lurked in minds which have not uttered it, that strong affection towards Jesus Christ is not of primary importance, — that our views and feelings in regard to him, however low, are sufficiently elevated, — that our chief business is to obey his precepts, and that, if these are obeyed, the great object of his mission is secured. But how obvious is the sentiment, that obedience to Christ's precepts is intimately connected with high conceptions of his character, and with strong affection towards him! Will not the heart which is most accustomed to meditate upon the greatness of Christ's goodness feel most the obligation of his law of love? Will not the mind which regards him not only as a prophet, but as a Saviour by whose mediation and sufferings God has been pleased to redeem the world, which is touched and softened by his character and near relation to the human race, — will not such a mind be peculiarly prompted to a cheerful service, to an animated obedience?"

1819. CHRIST'S LOVE FOR MAN. "It is not possible for us to conceive fully the love of Christ, because his state before entering the world is known imperfectly, and of course the greatness of the sacrifice which he made for us, and which is the best measure of love, cannot be estimated.

"There are, you well know, several passages of Scripture which, if literally taken, teach that Christ existed before he came into the world. And we have this very sufficient reason for interpreting these passages literally, that his whole character and the offices which he bears imply a more than human dignity. In the first place, Jesus Christ spoke and acted as if he was more than man, — as if he was conscious of superiority to all around him. There is a dignity, an authority, about him altogether peculiar, and such, I think, as would not have been becoming in a mere man, in his intercourse with brethren essentially his equals. The spotless purity of Jesus is another broad line of distinction between himself and all other men, something not to be explained by difference of circumstances or education. To be absolutely sinless is to be that which human nature never was before, and never has been since the time of Christ, and which is not to be expected in a mere human being in the present life. Finally, consider the offices which Jesus sustained, of Saviour of the world, the One Mediator between God and man, the Prince of Life, who is to raise the dead and to judge mankind, — do these offices appear to be compatible with simple humanity? Do they belong to a being who himself needs a mediator, who himself has sins to be pardoned? For this must have been true of Christ, if he was a mere man. I have just glanced at a few considerations which tend to prove a more than human greatness in Jesus Christ, and which seem to me to require that we should interpret literally the passages in which he is said to have come down from heaven, and to have had a glory with the Father before the world was.

"Jesus Christ, then, existed before he came into the world, and in a state of great honor and felicity. He was known, esteemed, beloved, revered, in the family of heaven. He was intrusted with the execution of the most sublime purposes of his Father. He is spoken of as the highest intelligent being next to Him who is the fountain and source of all, and he was in happiness as in glory the most express image of God. These views, which seem to me to be warranted by the Scriptures, show us a strength of love beyond expression in the entrance of Jesus Christ into this world, to live and to die a man of sorrows. We have here a sacrifice for the well-being of mankind to which nothing in our experience furnishes a parallel. . . . . .

"If the dignity of Christ was such as we have supposed, then the history of the universe contains no manifestation of pure, devoted love so stupendous as his; and angels, who knew the Saviour in his brightness and joy, must have received from his humiliation and suffering an impression of what charity can perform and endure, such as no other transaction can have given. I repeat it, the greatness of Christ's love cannot be adequately known, until we shall know hereafter the height from which he came to our rescue, the glory of which he divested himself, the riches which he parted with, to become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. We can, however, understand something, even here, of this love. The fact, that such a being was attracted to us by our miseries, that through the power of love he came to take upon him our griefs, and exchanged heaven for the cross, — this fact is a revelation of generous affection, brighter than the sun; and if believed, it ought to work in us more powerfully than all other events. . . . . .

"To feel the strength of Christ's benevolence whilst he was on earth, we must consider that it received no aid from any persons around him. It is comparatively easy to cher-

ish a sentiment which operates in every other breast, to reflect a light which shines strongly on every side. But the benevolence of Christ received no accession from sympathy. The fountain of this living water was within himself. He drew his love from his own will. The age in which he lived had no thought of a benevolence so purified, extended, and disinterested as his. It was a selfish, exclusive, bigoted age. The characters of the most improved were narrowed and debased by prejudice. Jesus Christ is seen to have been a lonely being, even among his disciples, when the tone and temper of his mind are considered. No one felt like him, or could lend fervor to his charity. His love cannot but impress us, when we thus consider how solitary, how unborrowed it was, how it resisted every social influence and example, in how full a river it flowed through a parched land, from which it received no tributary stream.

"To feel as we ought the love of Christ, we should consider also its extent. In reading his history, we see it spreading over the whole face of society, comprehending all orders of men, and embracing every human relation and interest. His love did not owe its strength, as ours too often does, to its limitation. The current was not powerful because hemmed in. It was not a close circle, within which his affection glowed to intenseness. He felt that the world was his home, and there was a prodigal liberality in his affection. He could not be happy but in expanding his sympathy to the whole range of man's wants and sorrows. There was no class of human beings beneath his notice. If he preferred any in regard, it was the poor and forsaken; precisely because they needed most a friend and benefactor. The place of instruction in which he seemed to take particular pleasure was the open air, where all might hear him. His charity, like that light to which he often compared himself, fell on all. It spread from the little child to the ends of the earth. It blessed individuals who were near him, and at

the same time reached the most remote nations and ages. In the same breast dwelt the tenderness of a son for an amiable mother, and the vast charity of the Saviour of the world. His benevolence partook at once the character of the stream which winds through the valley, and of the mighty ocean which connects all lands.

"Again, to perceive the strength of Christ's love during his ministry on earth, we must remember that he carried with him a consciousness of his immense superiority to all around. He was not a man moving among equals. He remembered the glory he had left, and to which he was to return. The wisest and best around him must have appeared to him like children. There were none in whose society he could find the refreshment and pleasure which we derive from equal and congenial minds. Now it is when men are surrounded by inferiors, that their pride, contempt, impatience, and weariness perpetually break forth. What a striking proof, then, of the benevolence of Jesus is it, that, so far from exhibiting indifference or contempt, he was distinguished by a lowly and gentle sweetness of deportment! His dignity was so softened by meek and tender feeling, that his disciples approached him with familiarity, lived with him as a friend, and felt no pain in his presence. We should have expected that a being so august, and whose works were so wonderful, would have struck awe into men's minds; but the amiableness of Jesus seems to have triumphed over his greatness, and to have inspired affection even stronger than reverence. We see this illustrated in every part of his history; in John's lying on his bosom, in Mary's anointing his head, and in the deep and tender grief with which his disciples after his death came to embalm his remains. When I consider this conscious superiority of Jesus, I cannot express my conception of the strength of his benevolence, as displayed in the affectionate familiarity with which he lived among men, in the gentleness and condescension of his man-

ner, in his hiding his majesty behind his compassion. It is far easier to scatter blessings than to stoop to the low and to live with them as a friend. The Son of God walking amidst the band of his disciples as an equal, sitting at their table, inviting to it the publican, and conversing with all he met on the highway and in the palace with like sympathy and interest, displays to my mind a charity stronger than when he employed his power to raise the dead. In every act and relation of common life, we see that his very life and spirit was benignity."

1817. CHRIST A MEDIATOR. "The sentiment which I wish to enforce is this, — that Jesus Christ is continually, in all ages, in all times, employed and interested in behalf of the human race, — that his kindness to mankind is constantly operating, — that he bears a permanent relation to them, — that he never ceases to do good.

"It is to be feared that these conceptions are not sufficiently familiar. Many, when they think of Christ, think of him only or chiefly as having lived several ages ago. Their minds travel back to the time when he dwelt on earth. They conceive of him very much as a teacher or prophet who brought an important message from God, and, having declared it, died in attestation of it, and then left the world to enter into a state of reward and rest. Jesus Christ is thus separated from us, and thrown back into a distant antiquity. Without being distinctly avowed, this is with many the most habitual and frequent mode of regarding Christ, and it is one cause of the faint interest often manifested in his character. . . . . .

"Such a view of Christ, when no higher views are connected with it, will not take a strong hold on men of improved and cultivated minds. They will not feel that their obligations to Christ are great, when he is regarded only as a prophet of early times; and the reason is, that, from their

early familiarity with the leading truths of his gospel, and from their habit of reasoning about these truths, they come to think that they might have learned these without his aid. You well know that since the time of Jesus the human mind has been much employed in seeking for evidences in Nature, of many interesting doctrines which he taught. The consequence is, that a system of Natural Religion has been constructed. We have works of the learned, in which God's unity and goodness, and a future state of retribution, are supported, and, we are sometimes told, are demonstrated, by proof drawn from the creation and providence. Now the effect of this mode of appeal to Nature in defence of these truths is, to lead men to the notion that Nature is a sufficient witness to these doctrines, and that the authority of Christ may be spared. Jesus seems to them to have conferred no signal benefit in teaching doctrines which are written on every page of God's works. But it is forgotten that it is by the light which Christ has thrown on Nature that they are enabled to read it with so much ease. It is forgotten that before his time philosophers hesitated, wavered, doubted, about these simple truths of religion, as they are now termed. It is forgotten that philosophy had not taken a step towards subverting idolatry.

"Hence the more cultivated become insensible to their obligations to Christ, when viewed as a mere teacher of an early age. Hence it is not uncommon to hear Nature arrayed against Christ, to hear Nature referred to as a higher authority than Christ, to see his instructions virtually set aside when they do not correspond with what is asserted to be the doctrine of Nature, although before his coming she had taught so little, — although it is his gospel which has given her a tongue. I have intended by these remarks to show that the habit of thinking of Christ merely or chiefly as a teacher who lived several ages ago, and left behind him an excellent system of religious truth, is not suited to excite a

strong interest in him, — certainly not such an interest, not such a sensibility, as pervades the New Testament.

"I would now observe that this mode of viewing Christ is wrong, defective, inconsistent with the plain declaration of the Scriptures. According to these, Jesus Christ is not a teacher whose agency was chiefly confined to the time when he was on earth. *He ever lives, and is ever active for mankind.* He sustains other offices than those of a teacher; he is Mediator, Intercessor, Lord, and Saviour. He has a permanent and constant connection with mankind, and a most intimate union with his Church. He is through all time, now as well as formerly, the active and efficient friend of the human race.

"When Jesus spoke of his death, he never spoke of it as if it were to separate him from the concerns of our world, as if he were to rest from his efforts for mankind. He regarded it as an event which was to introduce him to a nobler and wider sphere of activity, where he was to contribute more extensively to the conversion and salvation of mankind. 'I go to prepare a place for you.' 'When I am lifted up,' that is, crucified, 'I will draw all men to me.' After his resurrection, he did not speak as if his work had been finished by dying and rising again. He says, — 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth. Lo! I am with you to the end of the world.'

"According to the Scriptures, Christ, the Son of God, as a reward for his humiliation, labor, and sufferings for mankind, is now exalted to universal empire. Angels are subjected to him. Nature is subjected to him. He is present by his knowledge and power with his Church. He never forgets the race for which he died. He intercedes for them. He assists them. He watches over the interests of his religion. He will make it victorious. According to the Scriptures, the time is coming when his influence, now silent, will be conspicuous, when the veil behind which he operates

will be withdrawn. He is to come with hosts of angels. He is to raise the dead, to judge the world, to fulfil the solemn threatenings, and to confer the everlasting blessings of his gospel.

"This connection of Jesus Christ with the human race seems to me very clearly unfolded in Scripture, and though it is astonishing by its vastness, yet it is in no respect incredible. That God should choose to save and bless a race of beings by the agency of an illustrious deliverer is only an exemplification of that system which is established in nature, under which we see God committing the preservation and happiness of a large family to a parent, of a large kingdom to a sovereign. Connections and dependencies of this nature are peculiarly adapted to call forth an exalted benevolence, and the strongest and best affections of the soul. God might have raised mankind by an immediate act of power from sin and death. But it is more consistent with his character and with his usual modes of operation to assign this work to an exalted being capable of accomplishing it, and to place this being in the most interesting relations to our world.

"Is it now asked, 'Why are these views important?' I answer, they give a new complexion to the mind which truly imbibes them. They are not mere speculative principles. They are suited to move and actuate the soul to its centre, to have a powerful operation on the affections and the life, and therefore they should often be revolved. The heart which is truly imbued with them rises to Christ with a grateful and affectionate veneration which is felt for no earthly friend. There is something peculiarly affecting in the idea of a love, a philanthropy, living and operating through ages, and looking down from heaven with an unbroken tenderness on a race like ours. . . . . .

"I close with observing that a mind conversant with these views of Christ acquires a vigor of hope and a fulness of

joy which can be derived from no other source. Our hope of the heavenly world is nourished by no views so effectually as by these. That world, so pure, so distant, so unseen, though believed by us to exist, is not easily conceived of as designed to be our future dwelling. It is by bringing it home to the heart, that Jesus is there, that Jesus in our nature is there, that he is there as a friend, and forerunner, and advocate, — it is by cherishing these views that heaven is brought nigh to us, that hope acquires courage and strength to ascend to that pure and eternal state. It is possible, by the aid which these views of Christ can give, to obtain a conviction of the future glory of human nature altogether different from that vague and cold belief which the multitude possess, — a conviction which partakes of the vividness of immediate perception."

1816. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. "Christ came to establish an empire of benevolence, peace, charity, on the ruins of malice, war, and discord. The work of diffusing good-will through a world of free and voluntary agents must of necessity be gradual, and, like all the great purposes of God, must advance with a slow and silent progress. But this work has been in a degree accomplished by Jesus; and what is more, there is a very remarkable adaptation in his whole character to this office of spreading peace on earth, — such an adaptation as proves him to be the predicted *Pacificator of the World*. . . . . .

"At the thought of this reign of benevolence, the whole earth seems to me to burst forth into rejoicing. I see the arts and civilization spreading gladness over deserted regions, and clothing the wilderness with beauty. Nations united in a league of philanthropy advance with constantly accelerating steps in knowledge and power. I see stupendous plans accomplished, oceans united, distant regions connected, and every climate contributing its productions and

treasures to the improvement and happiness of the race. In private life, I see every labor lightened by mutual confidence and aid. Indigence is unknown. Sickness and pain are mitigated, and almost disarmed, by the disinterestedness of those who suffer, and by the sympathy which suffering awakens. Every blessing is heightened and diffused by participation. Every family, united, peaceful, and knowing no contention but for preëminence in doing good, is a consecrated and happy retreat, the image of heaven. The necessary ills of life shrink into nothing. The human countenance puts on a new and brighter expression. Human nature with its selfishness loses its base deformity, and is clothed with the glory of God, whose designs it embraces, with whose spirit it is imbued.

"Let us, then, welcome Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who came with this spirit from heaven. Let us welcome Jesus, whose gospel has already obtained so many conquests over selfishness and malignity, and brought to reign in so many hearts the principle of charity."

## SECTION FOURTH.

### SOCIETY.

1814. DANGERS OF FREE INSTITUTIONS. "One of the great benefits of a republican government is, that it admits the elevation of the best men to power. In hereditary governments, the people have no pledge that the crown will not be worn by the worst and weakest men in society. But 'a republic,' we are told, 'opens wide the door of honor and office to merit, — no artificial distinctions are there employed to depress virtue and wisdom, and superior talent has at once the means of development and reward. How great, then, is the prospect that in a republic the power of the state will be confided to the wise and good!' . . . . .

"The privilege of electing rulers is indeed invaluable;

but who does not see, in a moment, that this privilege will be a blessing or a curse, according to the character of the community? . Let a people be corrupt, and who will be their favorite,— the uncorrupted patriot, the man of inflexible principle, too upright to flatter bad passions and to promise subservience to unworthy views, or the subtle, specious demagogue, who pants for power, and disdains no art by which it may be acquired? Bad men, of all others, are most greedy of political power, for they see in power not only the gratification of ambition, but food for their avarice, and all their passions; and in a corrupt state of the community, what can preserve the reins of government from their unholy grasp? Depraved themselves, they understand the depraved feelings of others, and can bend every popular passion to their service. To the mercenary they exhibit the allurements of office; to the envious they promise a triumph over their superiors; to the discontented and restless a removal of fancied or exaggerated grievances. A corrupt state of society is the very element for the artful and aspiring. Unfettered by principle and inflamed by the prospect of success, they pursue power with an energy which no labor can exhaust, no disappointment repress, and on which better men look with astonishment. Better men are too much inclined to shrink in despair from a conflict with these unscrupulous spirits. They cannot stoop, they say, to artifice and falsehood. They cannot purchase office by the sacrifice of uprightness, by communion with the worst members and worst feelings of society. What have they, then, to hope from this desperate struggle with the depraved, but envenomed and unceasing abuse, and a final defeat, more fatal the longer it has been deferred? Such reflections too often paralyze the efforts of the wise and upright, and the place of honor which is their due is usurped by the unworthy.

"Is it said, that, under free institutions of society, men of

talents, if not of virtue, will rise, — that a republican country will at least escape a government contemptible by its folly and weakness? Yes! men of talent will rise; but they may be those who have a talent to wield a mob, rather than to govern a state, — to build up a party, rather than to strengthen the foundations of national greatness; it may be cunning, not wisdom, the power of managing vulgar passions, which men of vulgar minds often possess in the highest degree, that will triumph. In some corrupt states of society, not even this miserable talent will be requisite to obtain promotion. Let a people yield themselves to their passions, and especially to envy, the besetting sin of republics, and they will sometimes advance men of gross and narrow minds, in preference to men of distinguished ability, for the very purpose of humbling their superiors. In a republic, eminence in talent is sometimes a crime, and rude and clamorous ignorance may be raised above it. From these causes it may happen again, as it has happened before, that the rulers of a republic will be more weak and wicked than the spoilt child of royalty. Of what use, then, is the privilege of electing rulers to a depraved people?

"These remarks naturally lead to the consideration of another advantage peculiar to republican institutions, — I mean, the power they confer of removing without violence rulers who abuse their trust. This is indeed a great privilege; but again I say that its benefits depend on the character of the community. Let bad men rise to power by flattering the passions of a depraved people, and how are they to be displaced, except by the arts of men more subtle than themselves? The influence which their elevation gives is all directed to perpetuate their sway. They wield the power of the state for the great and almost exclusive purpose of strengthening the party to which they owe their greatness. For this end patronage and office are employed to reward past services, and to attract new adherents from

the ranks of their opponents. Venal presses are kept in perpetual action to increase the perversity of public sentiment, and especially to feed the spirit of party. There is no passion in our nature more headstrong, unrelenting, unbending, and unwilling to be convinced, than party spirit, and on this the artful and aspiring chiefly rely for the preservation of their power. Let this be kindled, and a corrupt administration has little to fear. To the thorough partisan no conduct of his leaders gives offence. His conscience is in their keeping. Self-will, pride, malignity, prompt him to uphold their worst measures. He would rather see the republic perish by their crimes, than owe its safety to the virtues and elevation of their opponents. I need not tell you that a corrupt republic is the very soil for party spirit. Here it grows without culture, and shoots up into deadly luxuriance, even when left to its native vigor. Let its growth be aided by human art, and it overspreads the fairest plants of social life, and darkens a nation with its poisonous branches. With these means of support, bad rulers have nothing to fear.

"Especially if the republic be extensive, as well as corrupt, is the prospect of removing from power those who abuse it almost sure of disappointment. The rulers of such a community, seated as they are in the centre, sending forth their patronage to the remotest extremities, and guiding to one end the exertions of their supporters, have every advantage for perpetuating their power. Their opponents, scattered over a wide extent of country, having different interests, wanting bonds of union, offer a divided and feeble resistance. They complain of the oppression under which the nation groans; but the credulous and malignant spirit of party is instructed to lay to their charge the very evils which they are struggling to avert, and a guilty administration contrives to direct upon their heads the indignation which its own crimes and follies have awakened. Thus we

see how little benefit is to be expected in a corrupt republic from the power of removing unfaithful rulers."

1817. JUSTICE TO THE POOR. "For what end are civil society, government, and property instituted? Not to build up a favored few, but for the *general welfare* of mankind. No valid reason, no justification, can be offered for the present order of things, for the division of the earth into distinct possessions, for the great inequalities of property which exist, but this, that the improvement and happiness of men in general are protected by these establishments. The rich derive their title to their wealth from this consideration, that the general welfare is advanced by the institution of property. Society was not instituted, as they are too apt to think, for them alone; but they belong to society. The true end of the social union demands that they live for the general as well as individual good, and the fact that they derive the highest benefits from civil institutions imposes on them a *peculiar* obligation to promote the public weal.

"Society is instituted for the good of all ranks of men. No single rank is made merely for the rest, but all are to exist for each other. It is a sentiment, abstractly true, though it can never be applied to practice, that a man forfeits his right to property just as far as he fails to contribute according to his ability to the common well-being. He breaks, in so doing, the tacit compact which every man is supposed to make who becomes or remains a member of society. According to these principles, there is a moral obligation on the rich to benefit the other ranks of society. This they necessarily do, in a measure, by employing the poor and recompensing them for their labor. Such service is a very important one. But when we consider their ability, and consider, too, the immense benefits which they receive from the labors of the poorer classes, they surely ought not to restrict their aid to this limit. . . . . .

"The present state of the world seems to me to demand of the rich a peculiar regard to the poorer orders of society. The time has come, when the security of civil institutions depends in no small degree on the prevalence of a conviction among the mass of the people, that these institutions are beneficial, that property with all its inequalities is a useful establishment, and that the rich are their benefactors and friends. Human nature is not formed to look patiently on superiors. A spirit of discontent generally lurks in the breasts of those to whom the humble offices of life are assigned. This spirit is at this moment peculiarly excited, and it is to be counteracted only by the diffusion of good principles through the great mass of society, and by a deportment in the rich which will engage the confidence of the poor.

"It has long been the tendency of things to increase the power of the middling and poorer classes of society. We must not apply to the present state of the world the maxims which were suited to darker ages and despotic governments. In such ages, and under such governments, the poor were spurned, and no revolt followed, because their spirit was broken, and they were reduced to a brutal ignorance. But the case is different in this and many other nations. Since the Reformation and the revival of learning, a new light has broken on Protestant countries, a light almost as diffusive as the sunbeams which enter at once the narrow window of the poor man and the broad one of his rich neighbour. A degree of knowledge and of mental activity unknown before has been communicated to the poorer classes of society. It is too late, even if it were desirable, to keep them in ignorance. The spirit of the age is too active and free, to suffer the chains to be fastened on their minds. They already know many things, and among other lessons they have learned *their own weight* in society. . . . . .

"The consequence of the progress of knowledge and of all improvements in these later ages undoubtedly has been

to arouse a restless and revolutionary spirit through society. This spirit is not to be condemned, as if it were altogether evil. Whilst it is in part quickened by bad passions, it is in part the natural and proper movement of the mind in pursuit of a better state of things. It is traced up to the fact that the human mind has outgrown old institutions. It is an impulse which we cannot but hope is to result in a more just and happy social order.

"But still, this spirit threatens evil, and it needs to be regulated and checked by the diffusion of sound principles of religion and morality. We must not imagine that this revolutionary spirit has exhausted itself. Its violence has been stayed by late events. But events cannot withstand the principles of human nature, and the powerful causes which are now exciting the activity of the human mind. The press, we must remember, is at work, — the mightiest engine ever set in motion by man. A freer intercourse, a more intimate connection, a more rapid communication of thoughts and feelings, than was ever known before subsists between men of the same class, and between different classes of society. We must not expect, that society, under these influences, is to return to its former state. It cannot rest as much on prejudice as it has done. It must rest more on reflection and on principle. In this country in particular, where the majority govern, where all ranks have an equal agency in the election of rulers, the chief support of social order is to be found, not in an outward power of government, but in the internal conviction and moral and religious sentiments of the community. Never did such strong motives, even of a worldly nature, exist as among ourselves, for the improvement of the poorer classes of society."

1817. ADDRESS BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF INDIGENT BOYS. "The strongest argument for education is found in the nobleness of the human faculties,

and the poor bring with them into being the same faculties with the opulent. Nature knows none of our arbitrary distinctions. The child in the humblest walks of life is as richly gifted, as largely endowed, as in the highest. He has within the same inexhaustible mine of power and affection, the same resources of heart and intellect. A flame is kindled in his breast which is never to die. Such a being is not to be viewed as an inferior animal, or as important only because he can perform certain labors for the community. He is valuable when considered as an *individual*, as well as when considered in relation to society. He has a nature which for its own sake deserves to be developed, and which God gave for the very end that it should be improved.

"Among the poor are not only all the essential qualities of mind and capacities of improvement which belong to all men, but all the varieties of intellect which are found in other ranks of life. It is, I believe, a fact, that a large proportion of that heaven-inspired energy which is ordinarily called genius, and which has done so much to advance the human mind, to open new regions of thought and action, and to give a new impulse to society, has been furnished by the inferior orders of society. There is the same chance, to speak in human language, that the sublime faculties of a Locke and Newton are wrapped up in the child of the poor man as in the titled descendant of nobles. As many great minds have dawned in hovels as in palaces. And the poor have not only their proportion of superior intellect, but they carry within them seeds of the highest and noblest virtues, of capacities of elevated devotion, of disinterestedness, of heroism, of those properties which raise our nature from the dust and mark out its immortal destiny. The possession of such a nature as this by the poor is certainly an unanswerable argument for opening to them, as far as possible, all those advantages which call forth the mind and heart, which give elevation of character, and render the whole of life a state *of improvement.*

"It will probably be replied to these remarks, that it is impossible to give to the poor great advantages, that their condition excludes them from the acquisition of various knowledge, and that Providence has thus forbidden the attempt to bestow upon them an education proportioned to their faculties. But this objection, I think, is founded in a wrong view of the nature and design of education. . . . . The great object of education is, not to store the mind with knowledge, but to give activity and vigor to its powers, to assist it in thinking and inventing, in comparing, discriminating, and combining. The sum of knowledge which schools and even universities communicate is inconsiderable. It bears a small proportion to what we derive from other sources, and from sources which are open to every mind. Our principal volumes are nature, experience, and society. Education is of use chiefly as it helps us to read these volumes, as it gives us the habits of patient attention, of observation, of accurate judgment, and of vigorous thought. . . . . .

"The remarks now made will, I hope, remove the objection to the instruction of the poor, that their condition forbids them to be learned. We do not wish them to be learned, nor is this the great end of education. We wish to train their faculties; and this may be effected for the poor, as well as for other orders of society. It will, however, be the effect of a general education of the poor, to awaken and disclose minds of a high order, formed for learning, research, and contemplation, which, without this aid, would have slumbered in obscurity. This, though not the greatest, is one great advantage of extending the best opportunities in our power to the poorer classes of society. In those classes are scattered those noblest works of God, superior minds, minds which ask nothing but a field for action, which need only to be relieved from the oppression of want, which can mount by their own native energy, which are formed to look on nature with a fresh eye, to investigate new truth, to explore

worlds of thought now undiscovered, to awaken by eloquence or poetry a higher life and feeling in the human breast. Great minds are the glory of their race, the instruments employed by Providence in improving mankind and in kindling and elevating their less favored brethren; and society has an interest in their development, wherever they exist. Justice to such minds is one benefit of a general education of the poor. Powerful as native genius is, it requires some aid. The most vigorous seed will perish without light and moisture, and the instruction of the poor affords to superior minds the necessary aid.

"Should the history of the world be traced, I believe it will be found, as I have said before, that society has derived a considerable proportion of its best materials — I mean superior minds — from the inferior classes of society, wherever these classes have enjoyed the advantages which are their due. The higher classes of society have a tendency to intellectual imbecility, and need to be replenished from the lower. The looser relations of the poor are more favorable to native vigor, originality, freshness of thought, where real genius is possessed; and from all this it follows, that the intellectual progress of a community, its mental activity, its energy of thought and action, will be promoted by extending to all classes the means of education, by giving everywhere to superior minds the opportunity of emerging and of lending their impulse to society. . . . . .

"That the development of intellect should have a tendency to injure the character of the poor, and to render them bad members of society, seems to be a reflection on the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, who must have constituted human nature with a singular want of skill, if its best faculties cannot safely be unfolded. I am persuaded, too, that this sentiment is at war with the history of the progress of society, which teaches us that there is a close connection between our intellectual and moral powers, and that knowl-

edge is friendly to virtue. The idea, that a large part of mankind must be kept in a state of brutal ignorance and degradation, and be sacrificed, as far as their higher powers are concerned, to the welfare of society, shocks our best feelings, and those feelings will generally be found in alliance with truth.

"It may be admitted that the education of the poor will give them a desire to better their condition, and that this desire may sometimes be impatient, and may hurry them into crime. But what then? Does not this desire in every class of society often break out into the same excesses? Shall we, therefore, extinguish it? The desire of rising, of improving our condition, is a radical principle of our nature, and one of the chief sources of all social improvements. It is the life of a community, and without it a people would sink into torpidness, sloth, and the most degrading vices. It is a miserable philosophy which would suppress the great springs of action in the human breast, because they sometimes act with a dangerous power.

"That men will labor less because improved in understanding seems to me to be an equally erroneous notion. The great motives to steady labor lie in a perception of the future consequences of actions, and require a mind of some comprehension, foresight, and calculation to feel their force; and hence we may expect the steadiest labor from men whose faculties have been enlarged by education. That this is precisely the fact, history and observation prove. Slaves and savages, who receive no education, are proverbially indolent. The hardest laborers in this country are the husbandmen of New England, — a class of men who have been formed under institutions peculiarly fitted to expand and invigorate the understanding. . . . . .

"Of all our benevolent institutions, those which regard *children* seem to me to hold the first rank. Let charity, indeed, extend itself with a divine activity to all the varie-

ties of human want; let it multiply its forms of action in proportion to the forms of guilt and suffering; let its channels be everywhere widened and deepened; let it erect hospitals, establish dispensaries and provident institutions, watch over almshouses, open receptacles for the reformation of the vicious, and administer comfort to the aged and dying. The aged and dying, however, will soon cease to suffer; their journey is almost finished; and the poor of middle age have formed characters which yield slowly and reluctantly to the influence of any means of improvement. But the child has just begun to live, with a mind pliant and tender, with habits not now rigid and unyielding, with a heart not now tainted and hardened, yet with propensities which, if unchecked, will probably issue in guilt and misery. Abandon him to ignorance, and his youth, if he struggle through its hardships, will train him to crimes for which society has reared the prison and the gallows. . . . . .

"The children of poor families too often inherit the vices and miseries of their parents. Brought up in filth, seeing constantly the worst examples, hearing licentious and profane conversation, abandoned to ignorance and idleness, or, if employed, only employed to beg in the streets, to extort money by falsehoods, to practise a thousand frauds, — from such children what can you expect but lives of sloth and guilt, leading to poverty more abject, if possible, than that to which they were born? This is the most affecting circumstance attending poverty produced by vice. Who can think without an aching heart of the child nursed at the breast of an intemperate mother, subjected to the tyranny and blows of an irritable, intoxicated father, and at length cast out upon the world without one moral or religious principle, or one honest method of acquiring subsistence? Take him under your protection, nurture his tender years, and you may hope to form him to intelligence and industry and virtue, to a life of cheerful and useful labor, and to the *felicities of a* better world. Do not, do not let him perish."

1819. OUR DUTIES TO THE POOR. "Formerly, the task of a Christian minister in pleading for the poor was comparatively easy. He had the plain precepts of his Master to support him, and he found in men's breasts instinctive principles and sympathies which responded to these precepts. Of late, however, we have had abundant discussions and speculations on the causes and remedies of poverty, which, however well designed, have tended to shake men's sense of obligation to relieve their poor brethren, and have given pretexts to the selfish and avaricious for shutting their hearts and hands. We have been told that poverty grows by charity, that the prospect of relief begets improvidence, that our giving bribes men to forsake labor, that the way to check beggary is to make it an intolerable condition; — from all which the inference seems natural, that the less we give, the better. If this doctrine has not been set forth in so many words, yet, I think, there has been an approach to it, so that giving to the poor is by some thought a less binding duty than formerly.

"I mean not to deny that much useful truth has been brought before the public by the late discussions on the subject of poverty. I am far from denying that injudicious, indiscriminate charity has swelled the evil which it hoped to alleviate. The Christian precept, to 'give alms,' has sometimes done injury, and chiefly because it has not been limited, as it should be, by another precept, namely, 'He that will not work, neither shall he eat,' that is, be supported by charity. In the Dark Ages, alms-giving was thought an expiation for sin and a passport to heaven. The dying left legacies to convents to be doled out to daily mendicants without regard to their character or state, so that society lost the labor of many of its strongest and healthiest members. And this evil has not been confined to the Catholics. Protestant sloth has been as injurious as Romish superstition. Too many among us give from a vague sense of duty, but

forget the obligation of giving vigilantly, carefully, in the manner most suited to do good. It is easier to give money than time and personal attention. Hence charity nourishes idleness instead of solacing want, and is a bounty on improvidence. Alms-giving, I freely allow, has caused much evil. I am also prepared to go farther and say, that, let us give ever so judiciously, we shall occasionally do evil, as well as good. The objections made to the most cautious charity are not wholly without foundation. But this is no reason for ceasing to give. In making these admissions, we are only saying that charity partakes of the imperfection of all human things. The truth is, we seldom or never receive or communicate an unmixed good. Every virtue produces occasional evil.

"It is sometimes objected to alms-giving, as I have intimated, that to prevent poverty is better than to relieve it; and that there is but one way of prevention, which is, to take from men all expectation of relief if they become poor. They will then, it is thought, have motives which can hardly fail to keep them from want. But, unluckily for such reasoning, there is one way only of cutting off this expectation, and God forbid that we should ever resort to it. That only way is, to drive all human feeling from our breasts; for as long as any kindness exists in a community, so long there will be resources open to the poor, let their poverty come how it may, and so long relief will be expected by the improvident. I repeat it, there is but one way of suppressing this hope of relief. We must cast from us all kind feeling. We must turn our hearts to stone. We must bring ourselves to see unmoved the beggar die at our doors. We must make up our minds sternly, inflexibly, to give nothing, let misery assail us with ever so piercing a cry, with ever so haggard, and worn, and famished a look; for nothing but this will prevent the improper dependence which is said to generate poverty. Let any sympathy sur-

vive, and it will act and be a hope to the improvident; and can any man seriously think that the evils of this hope are so great, that to avoid them we should turn ourselves into brutes, dry up the fountains of humanity within us, part with all that is tender and generous in our nature? I am free to say that the most injudicious alms-giving is an infinitely less evil to society than this extinction of sympathy. Better multiply beggars, than make ourselves monsters. Kind affection is the life of a community, and the excesses of these affections are to be chosen before a frozen selfishness.

"I would next observe, that I have no belief in the efficacy of this mode of preventing poverty. Let men know that want will find no relief, and I doubt whether it will be essentially diminished; for human nature has a strange power of shutting its eyes on consequences, especially in youth, and every day's observation shows us multitudes giving themselves up, through the power of the passions, to excesses, pleasures, which, as they see and know, have reduced others in their neighbourhood and families to penury, disease, and even premature death. Present gratification often outweighs an infinite future misery. Men are not to be kept from poverty by being taught that poverty is a helpless state, any more than they are to be kept from crimes by multiplication of capital punishments. The laws are not found to be most efficacious when men are gibbeted for every offence, and facts of a similar nature should caution us against attempts to meliorate society by unmixed rigor.

"Another consideration is too important to be passed over. Let poverty be made a condition in which no relief is to be hoped, which is to be given up to unmixed and unpitied misery, and the temptations to escape it by fraud and violence will be irresistible. No man will be poor who can find his way to his neighbour's coffers; and if, after all hon-

best exertions for self-support, a man should be reduced to want, I am not prepared to judge him severely, should he, to save himself from starving, make a prey of the superfluities of the rich.

"These remarks will not, I hope, be misunderstood. I am not pleading for injudicious alms-giving. It is a great evil. But there is an opposite evil which I think greater, and that is, making use of the bad consequences of charity as arguments for banishing charity from society; and to this point many late speculations on poverty have seemed to me to tend. Christ's precept to give to the poor is not a blemish in his system, but an important and noble part of it. The occasional abuses of charity are not to discourage us in exercising this virtue. We must feel, however, that we but half do this duty when we do it carelessly. We must strive to give so that the least evil and the greatest good may result from our beneficence. . . . . .

"Does any one ask, 'Why shall I pity and help the poor man?' I answer, because he is A MAN; because poverty does not blot out his humanity; because he has your nature, your sensibilities, your wants, your fears; because the winter wind pierces him, and hunger gnaws him, and disease racks and weakens him, as truly as they do you. Place yourself, my friend, in his state; make yourself, by a strong effort of thought, the inhabitant of his unfurnished and cold abode, and then ask why you should help him. He is a man, though rags cover him, though his unshorn hair may cover his human features, — a member of your family, a child of the same Father, and, what is most important, he not only has your wants and feelings, but shares with you in the highest powers and hopes of human nature. He is a man in the noblest sense, created in God's image, with a mind to think, a conscience to guide, a heart which may grow warm with sentiments as pure and generous as your own. To some this may seem declamation. There are some who

seldom think of or value *man as man*. It is man born in a particular rank, clad by the hand of fashion and munificence, moving in a certain sphere, whom they respect. Poverty separates a fellow-being from them, and severs the golden chain of humanity. But this is a gross and vulgar way of thinking, and religion and reason cry out against it. The true glory of man is something deeper and more real than outward condition. A human being, created in God's image, and, even when impoverished by vice, retaining power *essentially the same with angels*, has a mysterious importance, and his good, where it can be promoted, is worthy the care of the proudest of his race. . . . . .

"Next to the great doctrine of immortal life, we may say that the most characteristic element of our religion is that of UNIVERSAL CHARITY. And the doctrine of immortality and the duty of charity are not so separate as many may think; for love or benevolence is the spirit of the eternal world, the temper which is to make us blest beyond the grave, and to give us hereafter the highest enjoyment of the character and works of our Creator. There is another view by which it appears that the Christian doctrine of immortality blends with and sustains charity; — for, according to this doctrine, all men are to live for ever, Christ died for all, all are essentially equal, and the distinctions of their lives are trifles. Thus it is seen that the poor are recommended with an infinite power to the love and aid of their brethren. No man can read the New Testament honestly, and not learn to measure his religion chiefly by his benevolence. If the spirit, and example, and precepts of Jesus Christ have not taught us to love our fellow-creatures, we have no title whatever to the name and the hope of Christians. If we have not learned this lesson, we have learned nothing from our Master. About other things Christians may dispute, but here there can be no controversy. Charity is a duty placed

before us with a sunlike brightness. It comes to us from the lips, the life, the cross, of our Master; and if charity be not in us, then Christ does in no degree live within us, then our profession of his religion is a mockery, then he will say to us in the last day, — 'I was hungry and ye gave me no meat, thirsty and ye gave me no drink. I know you not. Depart.'"

1820. THE GLORY OF A STATE. "It is plain, that, to promote the good of our country, we must know what that good is, and as misapprehensions on this subject have done infinite injury, so just views will show us that every man in every class may contribute to it. The honor and happiness of a community consist not so much in the ability and acts of its public men, as in the character, spirit, and condition of its citizens; and whatever or whoever advances these builds up the public welfare.

"If I were to express in a line what constitutes the glory of a state, I should say, *it is the free and full development of Human Nature.* That country is the happiest and noblest, whose institutions and circumstances give the largest range of action to the human powers and affections, and call forth man in all the variety of his faculties and feelings. That is the happiest country, where there is most intelligence and freedom of thought, most affection and love, most imagination and taste, most industry and enterprise, most public spirit, most domestic virtue, most conscience, most piety. Wealth is a good only as it is the production and proof of the vigorous exercise of man's powers, and is a means of bringing out his affections and enlarging his faculties. Man is the only glory of a country, and it is the advancement and unfolding of human nature which is the true interest of a state.

"If this be true, we learn what is the great end of gov-

ernment, the highest good of civil polity. It is *liberty*. I am almost tempted to say that this is the only political blessing, and the only good gift which law and order can confer on a country. By liberty I do not mean what anciently bore the name, for anciently they had little but the name. I mean the protection of every individual in his rights, and an exemption from all restraints but such as the public good requires. We do not want government to confer on us positive blessings, but simply to secure to us the unobstructed exercise of our powers in working out blessings for ourselves. The spring of happiness is in man's own breast, not in his government; and the best office of government is to remove obstructions to this inexhaustible energy of the living spirit within us. Liberty, then, is the greatest political blessing, the distinction of a well-governed country. It is a good which cannot be measured. The glory of a country, then, consists in the free character of its institutions, in the security they give to every man's rights. . . . . .

"Every man may promote the glory of his country, for every man, whatever be his sphere, may put forth his powers in useful pursuits, and express and give some extension to right principles and virtuous affections. Let none imagine that they can do no good to the community because they are in private stations. The error has always been to ascribe to public men and public institutions an undue share in the prosperity of a nation. The great powers in the natural world, on which its motion, life, beauty, happiness, depend, are subtile, and everywhere diffused; and so the most effectual springs of a nation's felicity are very different from the cumbrous machinery which works at the seat of government. They are silent as the principle of life in the animal frame. They consist in what we call the *spirit of a people*, in a general respect for rights, which is the sole foundation of civil liberty, in industry, temperance,

intelligence, humanity, and piety. These are the elements of a country's life, and he who multiplies and invigorates these is a public benefactor.

"The sentiment, that a country's happiness consists chiefly in its virtue, is, I know, a trite one; but, if I mistake not, its truth is at this moment receiving some new illustrations, and the time seems to be coming, when it will be felt as it has never been felt before. Whoever looks at Europe will see, I think, that a new spirit has gone forth among the nations; that the human mind is unusually shaken; that society demands some new organization, and that new powers, and those of a *moral* nature, must be set at work to sustain its institutions. The old methods of keeping men in order — I mean military force, state religions, and the show and pomp of courts — have lost much of their efficacy, and lost them not merely through temporary causes, but through the very progress of the human mind. There is an accumulation of intelligence and energy, a consciousness of power, in the mass of the people, never possessed before; and such a state of society seems to me to demand a stronger influence and wider diffusion of moral and religious principle than formerly. The old arts of restraining a people by superstition and ignorance will no longer avail. A purer religion and a purer morality must take their place, or the prospects of the world are dark indeed. Governments are certainly weakened; they have lost in an unprecedented degree the confidence of the governed; the people are more intelligent and combined; and unless an inward principle of order be substituted for outward restraint, unless governments reform themselves and aid in reforming society, we may find that we have but entered upon the horrors of the revolutionary period. These speculations may be founded on imperfect knowledge of the state of the world; but of one great principle I have no doubt, that we are passing

rough a process which will give new efficacy to the con-
ction, that the stability of governments is their justice,
id that the prosperity of states rests on moral improve-
ents, on a Pure, Rational Religion, on a Spirit of Hu-
anity, within every nation of Christendom, and toward all
ankind."

## CHAPTER V.

### MIDDLE-AGE MINISTRY.

ÆT. 34–42. 1814–1822.

We have traced Mr. Channing's course through the irksome years of the Unitarian controversy, and have watched his spiritual growth, as manifested in the sermons preached to his people. And now we would observe him in his social, pastoral, and home relations during this period of his middle-age ministry. But before describing this portion of his life, it may serve yet further to illustrate his character as a controversialist and a theologian, to make a few remarks, which are naturally suggested by the preceding chapters.

The first point to be noticed, and it is an important one, is that it was his sense of duty to the cause of Free Inquiry, endangered as he thought by a bigoted conservatism, which led Mr. Channing into controversy. The individualizing tendency of Protestantism was then, in New England as elsewhere, swelling like the waters of a freshet, which threaten to sweep away dikes and cultivated acres, as well as icy fetters. But though he saw the risks to which Christendom was exposed through the rashness produced by rationalism in the self-willed and superficial, Mr. Channing at once recognized that it was as wrong as it was vain to attempt to dam up the liberal spirit which, on all sides, was seeking a larger

form of thought and life. He welcomed the spring-time, and accepted cheerfully the inconveniences of a transition age. The *unity in uniformity*, enforced by the decrees of infallible councils and by the creeds of Protestant synods, had passed for ever; and in the future was foreshadowed a *unity in variety* arising spontaneously among the body of believers bound into one by the consciousness of limitation and error, the desire of concert and mutual reverence. He rejoiced to think that the symbol was thus to give place to the reality, that the constrained catholicity of a dominant clergy was to make room for the universal communion of Christians filled with one spirit of holy love.

Meanwhile, a period was to be passed through of sectarian division, wherein each party, in its wish to be faithful to its own convictions, would be tempted to treat rival denominations with injustice. This era of debate he saw to be inevitable. It was folly to fear it. It was mere waste of time to oppose or to mourn over it. Duty urged him to follow the providential leading, with confidence to seek clearer views, with candor to listen to all who uttered their sincere opinions, never to cover up doubt by make-belief or half-belief, without dogmatism to be decided, and patiently to wait for the time when glimpses should be enlarged to complete vision. As faith ascends into knowledge, it becomes ever more apparent that according to Divine design the multiplicity of minds is a means of harmony, that the most bitterly opposed partisans are each other's necessary complements, and that the Church cannot afford to spare a single sect till the truth which it embodies has attained its rightful place. The principle by which Mr. Channing was governed he has thus distinctly expressed, and the

passage throws much light upon his views of his own position and duties.

"It is due to myself to say, that the controversial character of a part of my writings is to be ascribed, not to the love of disputation, but to the circumstances in which I was called to write. It was my lot to enter on public life at a time when this part of the country was visited by what I esteem one of its sorest scourges; I mean, a revival of the spirit of intolerance and persecution. I saw the commencement of those systematic efforts, which have been since developed, for fastening on the community a particular creed. Opinions which I thought true and purifying were not only assailed as errors, but branded as crimes. Then began what seems to me one of the gross immoralities of our times, the practice of aspersing the characters of exemplary men, on the ground of differences of opinion as to the most mysterious articles of faith. Then began those assaults on freedom of thought and speech, which, had they succeeded, would have left us only the name of religious liberty. Then it grew perilous to search the Scriptures for ourselves, and to speak freely according to the convictions of our own minds. I saw that penalties, as serious in this country as fine and imprisonment, were, if possible, to be attached to the profession of liberal views of Christianity, — the penalties of general hatred and scorn; and that a degrading uniformity of opinion was to be imposed by the severest persecution which the spirit of the age would allow. At such a period, I dared not be silent. To oppose what I deemed error was to me a secondary consideration. My first duty, as I believed, was, to maintain practically and resolutely the rights of the human mind; to live and to suffer, if to suffer were necessary, for that intellectual and religious liberty which I prize incomparably more than my civil rights. I felt myself called, not merely to plead in general for freedom of thought and

speech, but, what was more important and trying, to assert this freedom by action. I should have felt myself disloyal to truth and freedom, had I confined myself to vague commonplaces about our rights, and forborne to bear my testimony expressly and specially to proscribed and persecuted opinions. The times required that a voice of strength and courage should be lifted up, and I rejoice that I was found among those by whom it was uttered and sent far and wide. The timid, sensitive, diffident, and doubting needed this voice; and without it, would have been overborne by the clamor of intolerance. If in any respect I have rendered a service to humanity and religion, which may deserve to be remembered when I shall be taken away, it is in this. I believe, that, had not the spirit of religious tyranny been met, as it was, by unyielding opposition in this region, it would have fastened an iron yoke on the necks of this people. The cause of religious freedom owes its present strength to nothing so much as to the constancy and resolution of its friends in this quarter. Here its chief battle has been fought, and not fought in vain. The spirit of intolerance is not, indeed, crushed; but its tones are subdued, and its menaces impotent, compared with what they would have been, had it prospered in its efforts here." *

But though thus ready to defend freedom of conscience against every form of oppression, however plausible, Mr. Channing entertained no personal ill-will to-

* Preface to Reviews, Discourses, and Miscellanies, 1830. — The statements and arguments presented on the Orthodox side may be found in "A Letter on Religious Liberty, by Moses Stuart, Professor of Sacred Literature in the Theological Seminary, Andover." Boston. 1830. Professor Stuart therein avers that the accusations of Dr. Channing are "NOT TRUE," page 37. This Letter was replied to in "Two Letters on Religious Liberty, by Bernard Whitman." Boston. 1830. The reply called out a rejoinder in the Spirit of the Pilgrims, which Mr. Whitman answered in a "Third Letter."

wards those whose course he was called upon to resist. He had genuine dignity, indeed, and a high sense of honor, and was capable of feeling deep indignation ; but he had been for years too chastened in spirit to indulge anger or to cherish unkindness. And as he was considered by some of his Orthodox adversaries to have been quite too stern in his mode of conducting controversy, it is but right to mention one or two facts, and to give some extracts from his correspondence, which may serve to set forth his character in its true colors.

In relation to his letters to Dr. Worcester, one of his brothers thus writes : — " I was living in his house at this period, and when he had finished the letter, he read it to the Rev. Mr. —— and myself. We both at once made complaints at its mildness, and insisted that it had the tone of a timid man begging for mercy, rather than of a brave one who was supporting a righteous cause. By our importunity he was persuaded to modify it. He expressed the kindest feelings, but, on the other hand, was unwilling to seem lukewarm in what he regarded as a very serious matter. Many parts were altered accordingly ; and when the letter was finally sent to the press, its original gentleness was merged in the more emphatic passages which he had inserted in consideration of our urgent requests. Years afterwards, I believe in 1832, I was reading a tract of his, while sitting with him in his study. Its vehemence pained me so much, that I could not but remonstrate against its spirit. He listened patiently, hesitated for a moment, and then, looking up with the sweetest smile, said, — ' The sins of earlier days arise against me. I followed the judgment of friends in printing that. I deeply regret that there is a word there which strikes you as being bitter. Surely

I never felt an unkind emotion towards any person for a difference of opinion.' As he spoke, the whole history of the tract flashed upon me. It was the very letter to Dr. Worcester to which I had been instrumental in giving its present form. This was by no means the first or last occasion when he heard his own mildness reproved, and when he was induced, by fear of betraying the cause in which he was engaged, to use a warmth of expression that was really in discord with his own temper.

"In all differences of opinion with others, I never heard him utter a harsh word, and there were always marked expressions of disapproval, whenever he saw acrimony or unfairness manifested, however obnoxious the person might be against whom they were directed. When Dr. Griffin, who was the head of the Orthodox party, and bitterly opposed to Liberalism, was officiating at Park Street Church, a slanderous report was raised against him, as malevolent as it was false. I was walking with my brother one day in the Mall, when, Dr. Griffin having passed us, he was led to speak of this base story. He declared how deeply he was shocked to see a smile of triumph on the countenances of the Doctor's opponents, — many of them being of course his own supporters. His language on this occasion was the strongest which I ever heard fall from his lips. As he spoke of the spirit manifested by these men, made mad by theological hostility, he characterized it as exhibiting the bases elements in human nature, and as truly diabolical.

"I will give one more example to illustrate his habitual generosity toward opponents. A clergyman from a distant part of the State preached some sermons in Boston, in 1817, in which he severely criticized, and indeed actually vilified, the character of the Liberal

clergy in the most wholesale manner. I, in company with several acquaintances, was present. In the evening the discourse became naturally the topic of conversation among us. Much indignation was expressed. But my brother directed all his remarks to softening the feelings of those who were aggrieved by the abuse of honored friends. 'I cannot blame this stranger so severely,' said he; 'these harsh judgments never originated from himself; he was led by others into false impressions. How sad is controversy, that it should thus tempt our opponents to misrepresent men whom they might and should know better!' Thus did he endeavour to find extenuating circumstances whereby to explain, if not excuse, the conduct of his adversaries. These slight recollections are of worth only as proving the essential disposition and uniform behaviour of the man. He was thoroughly magnanimous and just."

The view thus given of Mr. Channing's character, by one who was an eyewitness of his course, will be confirmed by the following extracts from his letters.

1819. "I have to thank you very sincerely for calling my attention again to this subject. My inquiries have ended in a stronger conviction, if possible, of the truth and importance of the views which I have published. . . . . I believe that you have made as good a defence of Trinitarianism, or rather of Christ's supreme divinity, as can be expected, and am assured, that, the abler the advocate, the stronger and more general will be the conviction that the view cannot be supported.

"I wish you every blessing, and great and increasing usefulness in your important and responsible station. That God may deliver us both from selfishness, ambition, and prejudice, and that he may show us our errors, whatever

they may be, and give us honesty and boldness to acknowledge and openly renounce them, is my prayer."

1820. "I have read enough of Dr. Carpenter's work to learn its object, and I lament that the state of things among you has laid on him the duty of exposing so much at length the misrepresentations of Bishop Magee. . . . . I am too far from you to judge what is best, and since this work has been thought necessary, I cannot but rejoice that it has been undertaken by a man so imbued with the Christian spirit as Dr. Carpenter. The time has been, when it would have been thought good policy to oppose to the Bishop a controversial bully, able to meet him on his own ground and to fight him with his own weapons, and as little scrupulous about the means of humbling an adversary. But I trust the times of this ignorance are past, and that we have learned the wisdom as well as virtue of defending truth with moderation and benevolence. That party, especially, which makes its appeal to reason and looks for success to the extension of deliberate and impartial inquiry, has an interest in banishing passion and violence from controversy, and giving the example of forbearance and candor."

1821. "The death of Dr. Worcester affected me not a little, for you remember that he was one of my opponents in the Unitarian controversy, and certainly not the most forbearing. I trust that I learned from that experience a new lesson of tenderness and charity towards those who differ from me, and who may seem to be injurious. When I see how fast my theological adversaries and myself are passing away, and how soon our motives are to be laid open at a higher tribunal, I cannot but hope, as I look back to the time of our controversy, that I have cherished towards them no unchristian feelings.

"I have understood that Dr. Worcester fell a victim to

his zeal in the cause of missions, and for this every Christian will honor his memory."

We have seen Mr. Channing's earnest desire to do justice to the rights of individual minds; but now let it be observed, that, on the other hand, he did not slight the claims of the collective reason of man as declared in tradition. To many free inquirers, indeed, he must have seemed and did seem timid and tenacious of old prejudices. He was no destructive, and had no taste for criticism and negation; neither was he so insensible to the grandeur of spiritual problems as hastily to construct an eclectic system out of the ruins of past opinions, or to build a private temple from the unquarried rock which modern investigation had laid bare. Conscience compelled him to reject many dogmas in relation to God, human nature, and destiny, which the Puritans had transmitted to their children, and he gratefully received the cheering views which the more childlike piety and warmer charity of the age, under the guidance of clearer science, were inspiring. Though thus liberal, however, he was very far from casting aside all established convictions of the Church as superstitions.

Of the three grand classes into which Christians may be grouped, the TRINITARIANS, the NATURALISTS, and the MEDIATORIALISTS, Mr. Channing undoubtedly belonged at this period to the last. He did not look upon man as utterly corrupt in sin, and see in Christ the incarnate God, descended upon earth to bear the burden of our guilt and woe, and by self-inflicted penalty to provide the means of our justification and pardon. But neither did he regard man as in a normal state, advancing by natural progress, and see in Jesus only a person

of religious genius, who, under the impulse of a fine temperament, and the stimulant of enthusiasm in his nation, had attained to a union with God which was equally accessible to every human being. Undoubtedly he recognized a portion of truth in each of these systems, although dissenting from both. But he agreed rather with those, scattered among all sects, and forming, probably, in all ages, the majority of believers, who consider mankind neither totally depraved, nor yet merely undeveloped, but actually degenerate, through an abuse of free will. And in Jesus Christ he reverently acknowledged a sublime being, who, by his coming upon earth, had brought about a crisis in the condition of humanity, had touched with healing power the vital springs of goodness in our race, and had opened the heavens through which evermore flow in full influxes of spiritual life. With no impatience to invent satisfactory answers to mysteries which he saw to be unsolved, and especially anxious not to divert men's regards from the goodness of God's beloved Son by speculations upon his rank in the scale of being, he yet for himself was inclined to believe in Christ's preexistence, and his continued mediatorial power over human affairs. In a word, he was then an Arian. And any one who has read the extracts already given from his sermons will have perceived, that passages in his published writings, which have often been interpreted as merely eloquent rhetoric, were really the calm suggestion of thoughts, which, though he forced them upon none, he yet inwardly cherished as of profoundest interest.

Hereafter, perhaps, more than at present, it will be recognized as Mr. Channing's distinguishing peculiarity, that he blended so harmoniously in his theology views of Christianity which are usually held as irreconcilable.

Then, possibly, the deliberateness with which he kept before his mind, as open questions, doctrines which those around him on all sides dogmatically settled, may be considered a higher title to honor than the decision with which he stepped forward to uphold the right of free thought and speech. However this may prove to be, the fact undeniably was, that, while he formed the most free and generous estimate of human nature, he held opinions in regard to the Divine government, spiritual influences, a mediator, and the kingdom of heaven, which by most Liberal Christians would be considered rather mystical than rational. Has it been observed how closely he connected his confidence in the essential dignity of man, his aspirations after perfect union of the human will with the Divine, his hope for the future greatness of mankind, with the fact of the life of Jesus Christ? In this complex theology of Mr. Channing shall we find a proof that he was a man of imagination and sentiment more than a philosopher, or shall we rather admire the wisdom which, while it made him bold and frank where he was convinced, kept him humbly guarded before the unveiled wonders of the eternal world?

It certainly was not owing to unwillingness to abandon wonted habits of thought, to sluggish indifference, or to any form of selfish fear, that Mr. Channing chose to occupy the middle ground in theology; for nothing characterized him more than the youthful eagerness with which he greeted the advent of every newly discovered truth. He was "not a watcher by the tomb, but a man of the resurrection." He lived in the mountain-air of hope. And at this period of his life he was breathing in the freshness with which the whole intellect

of Christendom seemed inspired, as it pressed onward across the wide prairie which the science, philosophy, poetry, and revolutionary tendencies of the age had opened. It was with intense delight that he made acquaintance with the master minds of Germany, through the medium, first, of Madame de Staël, and afterward of Coleridge. He recognized in them his leaders. In Kant's doctrine of the Reason he found confirmation of the views which, in early years received from Price, had quickened him to ever deeper reverence of the essential powers of man. To Schelling's sublime intimations of the Divine Life everywhere manifested through nature and humanity, his heart, devoutly conscious of the universal agency of God, gladly responded. But above all did the heroic stoicism of Fichte charm him by its full assertion of the grandeur of the human will. Without adopting the systems of either of these philosophers, and, fortunately perhaps for him, without being fully acquainted with these systems, he yet received from their example the most animating incentives to follow out the paths of speculation into which his own mind had entered. In the extracts given from his sermons, there is nothing more striking than his increasing spirituality, his high ideal of human nature, his lofty enthusiasm, and glowing hope. In thought, act, speech, he was a poet, though his chosen position was the pulpit, and the sermon his chief medium of expression.

But it was to an English writer that he was indebted for yet higher pleasure, and perhaps as efficient aid. This was Wordsworth, of whom he always spoke with the most respectful affection, as of a benefactor by whom he felt that his heart and mind had been equally enriched. Shortly after the Excursion appeared, he obtained a copy

of it, which was sent over by a London house to a publisher who knew little of its worth. It had been heralded by the ridicule of the Edinburgh Review, which then was a dictator to the literary world of America yet more than of Great Britain. But to Mr. Channing it came like a revelation. He kept it constantly by him; and, as he once said, had "never read any thing but Shakspeare more." He saw a beauty even in its prosaic passages, admired the rare felicity of its language, and was inclined to consider it the most elaborate and finished production of the age. But it was the spirit of the man, rather than the skill of the author, that attracted him. Wordsworth's mingled reverence and freedom, loyalty and independence, manly simplicity and heroism, — his piety, trust, humility, profound conscience, and earnest aspiration, — his respectful, tender, appreciative love of man, recognizing greatness under lowliest disguises, and spreading sweet sanctions around every charity of social life, — his intense love of beauty, all-vivifying imagination, and mystical adoration of the Universe as the shadow of the Infinite Being, — his subjective habits of thought, metaphysically refined mode of observation, power of looking beneath all surfaces to the life, and beneath all forms to the spirit, — his high idealism, humanity, and hearty naturalness, in a word, combined to form a character with which Mr. Channing's was in full harmony.

The following extract from a letter to Mrs. Cappe illustrates at once the influence of Wordsworth over his mind, and indicates the direction which his thoughts were taking.

1820. "I occasionally see the Monthly Repository, and among the rational, sensible, and matter-of-fact communica-

tions which fill that work I have met now and then with pieces from a writer who seems to have made the discovery that Unitarianism and imagination and poetry are not irreconcilable foes. The author is one of Wordsworth's school. When I tell you that I incline to the heresy of this writer, and that I wish to see among Unitarians a development of imagination and poetical enthusiasm, as well as of the rational and critical power, you will not wonder at my curiosity in wishing to learn who this writer is. I have before told you how much I think Unitarianism has suffered from union with a heart-withering philosophy. I will now add, that it has suffered also from a too exclusive application of its advocates to Biblical criticism and theological controversy, in other words, from a too partial culture of the mind. I fear that we must look to other schools for the thoughts which thrill us, which touch the most inward springs, and disclose to us the depths of our own souls. Pardon me for finding so much fault. It is not owing, I hope, to censoriousness. I only wish that truth may be so presented as to be friendly to our whole nature, that it may develop, not chill, those powers which have always exercised the mightiest sway among men, and which seem most akin to inspiration."

The mood in which Wordsworth looked upon nature, man, and the course of Divine Providence, was for the most part quite congenial to Mr. Channing. But, from temperament and position, he was inclined to take a far more active part in the stirring scenes of the time than the poet seemed to encourage. To a great extent, indeed, their views of the French Revolution and of Napoleon's career were the same. Together they had stood upon the mountain peaks of religious faith, while the tornado of atheism, charged with the red lightnings of military power and the destructive hail of radicalism, had swept across

the civilized world; together they had seen the storm subside beneath the mild airs of humanity, and had looked down over valleys and lowlands serenely smiling in the sunshine of Divine love. But the lesson which Mr. Channing had learned from this tremendous experience was a conviction of the need and opportunity of peaceful reform. His gaze was bent upon the future, not the past. In full justice practically rendered to the nature of man, — in opportunities for culture, refinement, social position, wealth, and free intercourse opened to all classes equally, — in a spirit of brotherhood embodied in honorable and humane relations, he foresaw the means, the only means, of reëstablishing reverence, loyalty, courtesy, and contentment. Thus are we brought to consider the position which he held in political and philanthropic movements. And we shall find that the earnest humanity of his youth and early manhood had not wasted itself, but rather gained depth and volume in its onward course.

The extracts already given from his sermons have sufficiently indicated Mr. Channing's feelings in regard to the military despotism of France under the stern sway of Bonaparte.* We are now to witness the unbounded exultation with which he greeted the news of the overthrow of the man whom he then and through life regarded as an atrocious tyrant. On the 8th of June, 1814, a number of the citizens of Boston and Massachusetts assembled

* There are yet stronger passages than those which have been quoted in the previous volume. And, except for the purpose of biographical illustration, the editor would not have felt himself at liberty to preserve expressions of opinion which are so plainly colored by the prejudices of the past. But it is well to keep a record of the state of feeling with which the great crisis of Modern Europe was regarded by the men of that day. Let the future judge of all the actors in those trying scenes.

at the house of the Hon. William Phillips, the Lieutenant-Governor of the State,

"to consult upon the propriety of noticing the event of the entire subversion of the military despotism which had so long desolated the Christian and civilized world, in a manner suited to its character and importance, and to the sentiments which it was calculated to inspire. Deeply impressed with the magnitude and the beneficial and lasting influences of this revolution upon the best and dearest interests of society, they had no hesitation in recommending to their fellow-citizens the observance of a solemn religious festival in commemoration of the goodness of God, in humbling unprincipled ambition, in crushing wicked and unjust power, in delivering the world from cruel and disgraceful bondage, in restoring to mankind the enjoyment of their just rights under the protection of legitimate government, and in giving to nations the cheering prospect of permanent tranquillity. For that purpose a large and respectable committee was chosen to make the necessary arrangements, composed of the following gentlemen: —

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|---|---|
| Hon. O. Gore, | T. H. Perkins, |
| George Cabot, | E. H. Mills, |
| John Warren, | John Lowell, |
| B. Pickman, Jr., | Samuel Putnam, |
| George Bliss, | Wm. Sullivan, |
| John Phillips, | Rev. Wm. E. Channing, |
| H. G. Otis, | Joshua Huntington." * |

Mr. Channing was elected to deliver the sermon. On the 15th of June, the day appointed, a large assembly, composed of the most intelligent and influential persons

* Appendix to a Discourse delivered in Boston at the Solemn Festival in Commemoration of the Goodness of God in delivering the Christian World from Military Despotism, June 15th, 1814.

in the community, filled the Stone Chapel. Never since the time of the adoption of the Constitution had there been in that city a meeting of a political character animated with a deeper joy; and no speaker could have been better fitted to give voice to the latent enthusiasm of the crowd. On no public occasion of his life was he so carried away by sympathy with the profound and passionate emotions which swelled in the popular mind. He gave full vent to his feelings, — with free and bold strokes painted the past degradation of Europe, — poured out the vial of indignant censure upon the ambitious despot who had made Christendom his prey, — reawakened the memory of the awful apprehensions with which men had watched his destructive career, — and when the audience were swept along in prospect to the verge of ruin, then he drew aside the dark cloud-curtain, and showed the benignant promises of peace spread out in mercy before the exhausted nations. As he uttered the words, "The oppressor is fallen and the world is free," the pent-up feelings of the assembly burst forth in acclamation. It is said that the preacher paused, and calmly reminded his hearers that they were in the presence of God, to whose providential aid their humble gratitude was due.

This sermon was rather an extemporaneous overflow, than a studied address; but it may be desirable to extract a few sentences. They prove that Mr. Channing drew encouragement from scenes which had turned many a fervent reformer into a timid conservative, and that he looked forward with confiding hope to better times.

"From the events which we this day celebrate, we are especially to learn that most important lesson, to hold fast our confidence in God, and never to despair of the cause of hu-

man nature, however gloomy and threatening may be the prospects which spread before us. How many of us have yielded to criminal despondency! ..... But now we are taught, as men, perhaps, never were taught before, to place an unwavering trust in Providence, to hope well for the world, to hold fast our principles, to cling to the cause of justice, truth, humanity, and to frown on guilt and oppression, however dark are the scenes around us, and however dangerous or deserted may seem the path of duty. .....

"A most solemn experiment has been making on society. The nations of Europe, which had all in a measure been corrupted by infidel principles, have been called to witness the effect of those principles on the character and happiness of nations and individuals. The experiment is now completed, and Europe and the world are satisfied. Never, I believe, was there a deeper conviction than at the present moment, that Christianity is most friendly to the peace, order, liberty, and prosperity of mankind, and that its subversion would be the ruin of whatever secures, adorns, and blesses social life. Europe, mangled, desolated Europe, now exclaims with one voice against the rule of atheism and infidelity, and flies for shelter and peace to the pure and mild principles of Christianity. Already the marks of an improved state of public sentiment may be discerned. We are at length permitted to anticipate the long lost and long desired blessing of general and permanent peace. A new era seems opening on the world. It is our hope that the storm which has shaken so many thrones will teach wisdom to rulers, will correct the arrogance of power, will awaken the great from selfish and sensual indolence, and give stability to governments by giving elevation of sentiment to those who administer them. It is our hope, that calamities so awful, deliverances so stupendous, will direct the minds of men to an almighty and righteous Providence, and inspire seriousness and gratitude, and a deeper attachment to the religion

of Christ, that only refuge in calamity, that only sure pledge of unchanging felicity. Am I told that these anticipations are too ardent? Perhaps I have indulged the hopes of philanthropy, where experienced wisdom would have dictated melancholy predictions. I am not forgetful of the solemn uncertainty of futurity. But amidst all uncertainties which surround us, one truth we know, that God governs, and that his most holy and benevolent purposes will be accomplished." *

The joy of this festival was sobered, however, by the reflection, that, though peace had settled upon Europe, the United States and Great Britain were still at war. New England was at this period utterly prostrated, her commerce paralyzed, her people bowed down with taxation, and to such an extent had dissatisfaction with the measures of the general government spread, that in December, 1814, delegates selected from her most eminent citizens assembled in convention at Hartford, Connecticut, with the view of securing their endangered rights, and consulting upon measures suitable to the exigencies of the time. Doubtless there were some who, in their disgust at the war, were inclined to urge a separation of the New England States from the Union; but it is now well understood that the object of that Convention was to open a vent to the popular excitement, to allay passion, to give a safe direction to the indignation of the community, and thus to avert the threatening danger of secession. Mr. Channing was among those who thought that every thing should be sacrificed, except essential principles, for the preservation of the Nation. Then, as through life, he was devotedly attached to the Union, and though, as we have seen, opposed to the war with

* Discourse at the Solemn Festival, &c., pp. 11 – 15.

his whole soul, as utterly unjustifiable and inexpedient, he yet never allowed himself to despair. He would not abandon the hope, that the promise given to the world in this republic should be fulfilled. His views are well shown by a few extracts from a sermon preached to his people immediately after the news of the Treaty of Ghent arrived, and repeated on the day of thanksgiving for the peace.

"I have said, that the single consideration, that war is at an end, is enough to fill our hearts with gratitude. But how should this gratitude be heightened, when we consider the state from which peace has rescued our country! The continuance of the war must, I fear, have destroyed us as a people. We had poured out our resources with a profusion which had emptied the treasury of the nation, and destroyed the credit of the government. Increasing taxes, imposed on an impoverished people, would have fomented discontent and insurrection. In this broken state of society, our best institutions would have been shaken to the foundation and subverted. The obligation of contracts would have been violated. General bankruptcy would have spread general distress, and destroyed the moral principles of the community. A spirit of insubordination, inflamed by hopeless suffering, would have annihilated the authority of law. The bonds of society would have been dissolved. These, at least, were the solemn forebodings of our most reflecting men. Peace has saved us from these convulsions. . . . . .

"Peace is snatching us, too, from the brink of civil dissensions. We seemed to be approaching a solemn crisis. To the evils of a foreign might soon have been added the sorer evils of internal war. Thank God! the union of these States will at least be prolonged. The day which is to witness the dissolution of our political fabric is at least deferred.

May we not trust that its great ends will in a measure be accomplished? Peace has placed the present rulers of this nation on a new ground. Without endangering their power, they may now consult the good of the whole country. Every motive incites them to encourage industry, enterprise, the development of resources, in every division of our wide land. Let every aid be given them in the establishment of a generous policy. It is very unimportant in whose hands is the power of the state, if it be but honorably and wisely employed. Most ardently do I hope that the men who have plunged this country into ruin may expiate their error by embracing, at this auspicious moment, a magnanimous course, and that their success may find its reward in the support of all parties into which we are unhappily divided. Prosperity such as our nation never yet experienced is brought within our reach. Nothing now is wanting but an impartial administration of the government, and a spirit of mutual forbearance among our citizens, to fulfil the bright anticipations which patriots of better days cherished for this favored people.

"May we not hope that the lessons of experience will not be lost, that a better spirit will pervade our communities, that we shall learn the value of a broad scheme of action, embracing at once the interests of all sections of this extended republic? May we not hope that the spirit of enterprise and improvement will now be unchecked, that new cities and towns will everywhere arise on our shores and in the wilderness, that arts and science will be widely diffused, that institutions sacred to humanity and virtue will meliorate the tone of social relations, that civil and religious liberty will be guarded and cherished as our best possession and most honorable distinction? Let us rejoice that we are once more to be bound in amity and profitable intercourse to every nation under heaven. God grant us perpetual peace! God grant us the honor of contributing by our commerce, by

the light of our intelligence, by the example of a free, virtuous, and contented people, to the happiness and advancement of the human race!"

Thus liberal and magnanimous were Mr. Channing's political sentiments at the close of the troubled years through which the humanity of Europe and America had been called to pass. But the sermon whence the above extracts have been made is interesting also as manifesting his views in relation to Peace. The horrible cruelties by which Christendom had been blasted, as by lava-floods and ashes from the open crater of hell, had taught him, in common with thousands in all lands, to look upon war as the most awful and wasteful crime of which nations and men can be guilty. And he takes this occasion to deepen in his people's minds a conviction of the honorableness and blessedness of peace.

"I rejoice with you that the groans of the wounded and dying are no more to be heard on our shores, that the ocean is no longer to be stained with our own or hostile blood, that the skies are not again to grow red with the portentous glare of flaming towns, that we are no more to swell the crowd of widows and orphans whose hopes have perished on the field of battle. I rejoice with you that the soldier is to return to his home from the depraving influences of a camp, and to earn subsistence by better means than slaughter and plunder. I rejoice with you that the resources of our country are no longer to be exhausted in carrying fire and death to neighbouring provinces, that we are no longer to cast away our own blessings by attempting to destroy the blessings which God bestows on our brethren, no longer to ruin ourselves by seeking the ruin of another civilized and Christian nation. I know that to many war is a matter of course, that it seems to them a trifling affair

to shed man's blood, to desolate fruitful regions, to scatter terror, want, and misery over once happy lands. But, thank God! I speak to some not thus hardened by savage customs and the calculations of inhuman policy, and who regard an unjust and unnecessary war as concentrating the guilt of multiplied murders. For one, I do rejoice that this war is to be terminated without the erection of a single monument of triumph upon the soil of this Commonwealth. What compensation could have been found in the most splendid victory for the loss of distinguished citizens, of men made noble by character and intellect, for the anguish of parents, widows, children, mourning the slain, for the wretchedness of bereaved, dispersed, impoverished families? It is not Christianity, certainly, that would teach us to forget the loss of friends in brutal exultation over the slaughter of enemies,— enemies who yet are men of the same nature with ourselves, children of the same Heavenly Father, commended by the same Redeemer to our good-will. . . . . .

"What a change! We can now look forward to the opening year without the anticipation of battles, in which even success would have covered us with mourning. Instead of watching with solicitude the movements of hostile fleets, we shall see our harbours enlivened with friendly sails. The ocean, instead of bearing freights of death, will waft onward the exchanges of mutually beneficial products. Our homes are filled with happy families no longer distracted with agonizing fear. Whose prospects has not this joyful event brightened? From whose heart has it not chased most melancholy apprehensions? How had war palsied the arm of industry, closed the shop of the artisan, bound our ships to our wharves, clogged all channels of intercourse, drained off our means! Rich and poor alike have felt its power. From many once prosperous families it has swept away the sure support of life. From many an honest laborer it has snatched the daily bread of his household,

and many a generous spirit has it forced to lean on bounty which once, in self-respect, it would have spurned. Have we not all had reason to fear that by its continuance the earnings of better times would have been crumbled down, and that those dependent on us would have sunk into want? But now this blighting scourge is stayed. The hope of honorable subsistence is revived in manly hearts. Anxiety is driven from the brows of parents. Cheerfulness spreads light through the comfortless dwellings of the poor. The young need no longer waste their best years in dangerous and disheartening idleness. Fields open on all sides for the expanding powers of enterprise.

"With what joy may we look on our venerable metropolis, — joy heightened by the solicitude with which we have watched the decline of her prosperity! Had the war been but for a few years protracted, its ancient honors must have been humbled; its inhabitants would have been dispersed, its schools shut up, its churches deserted, its institutions of piety and benevolence struck with decay. But now the fetters which have bound our energies are broken. Our silent streets are once more sounding with the roll and hum of business. Our grass-grown wharves once more are to swarm with loaded drays, and to be filled with heaps of merchandise. Our dismantled ships once again are to spread their wings, and bind us by ties of harmonious intercourse with every region of the earth. Once more our beloved metropolis is to become the home of honorable usefulness, the nursery of public spirit, knowledge, charity, and every institution which embellishes and exalts human nature. Wealth is again to flow in upon us through all the circulations of industry, not to feed luxurious indolence, but to give employment to the poor, to quicken ingenuity, to awaken the spirit of beneficence, to encourage science and the elegant arts, to nurture genius, to endow seats of learning, and, above all, to diffuse the knowledge and power of Christianity. My

friends, I rejoice with you in these cheering prospects. Enter again on the labors which make the true glory of nations. God send you success!"

Thus earnestly bent was Mr. Channing to discourage the infernal custom of war, and especially to allay "the proud, vaunting, irritable, contentious, aspiring temper, more disposed to honor courage than humanity, more restless the more it is successful, more devoted to party than to public weal, more open to the influence of parasites and intriguers than of wise and impartial men," which he pronounces to be the bane of republics. But while thus longing for the era when the lion and the lamb should be led in a leash by the little child, Charity, which he believed Christ had come to introduce, and which he was assured would in the fulness of time knit our long-sundered race into one, he was not then prepared to take the ground of condemning defensive war. Whether it is to be traced to natural temperament, to early training, to historical studies, to the habits of thought of the age, or to principle, it is certain that he had the spirit which, though frail in physical structure, and devoted to his pastoral office, would have prompted him to fight in defence of his country in an extreme emergency. Incapable of personal fear, chivalric in the tone of his character, and predisposed to that love of heroic deeds which in rude ages of the past has so often tempted noble beings to forget, amid the excitements of daring devotedness, the destructive outrages of war, and which in the more humane future shall surely find a worthy field of action in magnificent works of creative industry, he was nowise disposed to abandon the freedom of his native land to the mercies of an invading foe without a struggle. Throughout this pe-

ried, in private and from the pulpit, he maintained that it is the duty of the citizen to die, if need be, in protecting the religious and civil institutions of his nation and the inviolability of home. In this very discourse on Peace we find him saying, —

"We feared that the approaching spring would invite hostility to our very doors, that our families would be dispersed, and that the stillness of suspended business would be broken by the tumult of battle. Had this lot befallen us, I trust that we should have done our duty. We should have fought for the city of our fathers, for our altars and our firesides, with the spirit of freemen and of Christians, relying on the justice of the right of self-defence. But how should we bless God, that we have been saved from this sad necessity!" *

Fervent Christian though he was, brave, subdued in will, humane, and confiding in God, it thus appears that at this period of his life Mr. Channing had not attained to see the omnipotence of love in its undimmed brightness. There are very few even now, indeed, who have a vital conviction that the only power which can subdue violence and wrong is active kindness. Even now they are thought visionaries, who are ready to disband armies and militia, change frigates into merchantmen, dismantle forts, and make of prisons colleges for moral and manual culture. And how can universal peace prevail, until the rule of force in every form, and even the negative principle of non-resistance, give place to the living law of co-operation in all industrial, commercial, social relations of communities and states? In unreserved adherence to the cause of peace, Mr. Channing was surpassed by his honored friend, the Rev. Noah Worcester, who was at this

* See also "Duties of the Citizen in Times of Trial and Danger," Works, Vol. V. pp. 411–422.

time residing in the neighbourhood of Boston, and editing the Christian Disciple.

This noble-hearted philanthropist had imbibed in fullest measure Christ's spirit of perfect love. Born and bred among the hard-working farmers of New England, self-instructed, and as simply independent as he was unpretending, deliberate, but direct, in his habits of thought, patient to follow out an admitted principle in all its ramified applications, calm from discipline yet more than from natural temper, this wise and gentle man adopted in its length and breadth the rule of overcoming evil with good. He lived in a period when Christendom was rent by almost universal war, his own nation was shaken by fierce political struggles, and, prompted by irresistible love of truth, he gave utterance to opinions which plunged him at once into the midst of angry sectarian controversies; but still he drew sweetness from every bitter experience, and, candidly as frankly declaring the convictions to which conscientious study brought him, walked ever attended by a guardian angel of tranquillity. Poor, enfeebled by a painful disease, and dwelling in obscure retirement, he was even in extremest age a mindful observer of every humane movement, kind while just to individuals and parties, and opening his heart with hospitable sympathy to every reform which promised to reconcile men to their brethren and to God. To the very end of his long course his presence was majestic in its mildness, and he wore upon his serene features and meek forehead, with its parted silver hair, an aspect of benignity which marked him for the Friend of Peace.*

Noah Worcester may justly be called the father of the

* See Dr. Channing's cordial tribute to this philanthropist, Works, *Vol. IV., pp.* 394 - 407.

Peace movement in this country, by his articles in the Christian Disciple, and his "Solemn Review of the Custom of War." From the first, however, Mr. Channing gave him the support of respectful sympathy and active coöperation. In the spring of 1816, he preached a discourse on War before the Convention of the Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts,* which was immediately printed and widely circulated, deepening in many minds the convictions already taught by the terrible history of the times. This discourse prepared the way for the formation of the Peace Society of Massachusetts, the first meeting of which was held in his study in the parsonage-house of the parish. From this society sprang all the kindred ones in our country, and its influence was felt abroad. Mr. Worcester was its corresponding secretary, and the editor of its periodical; but he relied in all his measures upon the advice of Mr. Channing, who was one of the society's counsellors, and, according to the authority of the Rev. Dr. Pierce, "its life and soul." For years he devoted himself to the work of extending its influence with unwavering zeal, as many of his papers of that period attest; and from among these we select two, as bearing upon important public questions. The first is the following memorial, which was prepared by him.

"To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled. The memorial of the members of the Peace Society of Massachusetts respectfully represents, —

"That the society which now solicits the attention of our national rulers was instituted for the single purpose of

* Works, Vol. III., pp. 29 – 58.

diffusing pacific and benevolent sentiments through this country, and through the world. Impressed with a deep and sorrowful conviction that the spirit of Christianity, which is a spirit of mercy, peace, and kind affection, is imperfectly understood; afflicted by the accumulated miseries and extensive desolations which war has lately spread over the fairest, most fruitful, and most enlightened regions of the earth; and at the same time encouraged by many decisive proofs of the revival of purer and more benevolent principles among Christian nations; your memorialists have formed this association, with the solemn and deliberate purpose of coöperating with the philanthropists of every country in promoting the cause of peace and charity, in stripping war of its false glory, and in uniting different communities in the bonds of amity and mutual good-will. We are sensible, that, from the nature of our object, it is chiefly to be accomplished by a silent and gradual influence on the minds of men, and accordingly we have limited our operations to the circulation of useful treatises, in which the pacific spirit of our religion has been exhibited with clearness, and we hope with success. We believe, however, that the present moment demands a departure from our usual course, and we cherish the hope, that, by an application to the government under which we live, important service may be rendered to the cause of humanity, in which we are engaged.

"The present memorial is founded on two occurrences, which we hail as auspicious to the pacification of the world. The first occurrence to which we refer is the well-known and unprecedented union of several of the most illustrious powers of Europe, in declaring before 'the universe their unwavering determination to adopt for the only rule of their conduct, both in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other government, the precepts of Christianity, the precepts of justice, *of cnarity*, and of peace.'

"The second occurrence to which we refer is the decided expression of pacific sentiments and anticipations in the conclusion of the late message of the President of the United States, in which his parting wishes for his country are expressed with tenderness and power. In this remarkable passage, worthy the chief magistrate of a Christian community, he expresses his conviction, that the 'destined career of his country will exhibit a government which, whilst it refines its domestic code from every ingredient not congenial with the precepts of an enlightened age and the sentiments of a virtuous people, will seek by appeals to reason, and by its liberal examples, to infuse into the law which governs the civilized world a spirit which may diminish the frequency or circumscribe the calamities of war, and meliorate the social and benevolent relations of peace; a government, in a word, which may bespeak the noblest of all ambitions, that of promoting peace on earth and good-will to man.'

"On the occurrences now stated your memorialists respectfully beg leave to found the following suggestions and solicitations.

"First. We respectfully solicit, if it be consistent with the principles of the constitution, that the solemn profession of pacific principles, lately made by several distinguished sovereigns of Europe, may be met by corresponding professions on the part of our own government. Whilst we are sensible that a melancholy discordance has often existed between the language and the conduct of rulers, we still believe that the solemn assertion of great and important principles, by men of distinguished rank and influence, has a beneficial operation on society, by giving to these principles an increased authority over the consciences of those by whom they are professed; by reviving and diffusing a reverence for them in the community; and by thus exalting the standard of *public opinion*, that invisible sovereign, to whose power the most absolute prince is often compelled to bow,

and to which the measures of a free government are entirely subjected. When we consider the support which is now derived to war from the perversion of public sentiment, we are desirous that our government should unite with the governments of Europe in a distinct and religious acknowledgment of those principles of peace and charity on which the prosperity of states and the happiness of families and individuals are alike suspended.

"Secondly. We respectfully solicit that Congress will institute a deliberate inquiry, for the purpose of ascertaining the methods by which this government may exert on human affairs that happy influence which is anticipated by the President of the United States, the methods by which it 'may infuse into the law which governs the civilized world a pacific spirit,' 'may diminish the frequency or circumscribe the calamities of war,' and may express the 'most noble of all ambitions, that of promoting peace on earth and good-will to man.' We are persuaded that a government sincerely disposed to sustain the august and sublime character which is here described, of the pacificator of the world, will not want means of promoting its ends. We trust, that, under the persevering and well-directed efforts of such a government, milder principles would be introduced into the conduct of national hostilities; that the reference of national controversies to an impartial umpire would gradually be established as the law of the Christian world; and that national compacts would be formed, for the express purpose of reducing the enormous and ruinous extent of military establishments, and of abolishing that outward splendor which has so long been thrown around war, and which has contributed so largely to corrupt the moral sentiments of mankind.

"When we represent to ourselves a Christian government, sustaining this beneficent relation to the world, mediating between contending states, recommending peaceful methods of deciding the jarring claims of nations, laboring to strip

war of its pernicious glare and to diminish the number of those who are interested in its support, diffusing new and generous sentiments in regard to the mutual duties and obligations of different communities, and inculcating by its own example a frank and benevolent policy and a sincere regard to the interests of the world, — when we represent to ourselves such a government, we want language to express our conceptions of the happy and magnificent results of its operations. It would form a new and illustrious era in human affairs, whilst, by the blessings which it would spread, and by the honor and confidence which it would enjoy, it would obtain a moral empire more enviable than the widest dominion ever founded on violence and crime.

"Loving our country with tenderness and zeal, accustomed to regard her as destined to an exalted rank and to great purposes, and desirous to behold in her institutions and policy increasing claims to our reverence and affection, we are solicitous that she should enter first on the career of glory which has now been described, and that all her connections with foreign states should be employed to diffuse the spirit of philanthropy, and to diminish the occasions and miseries of war. Of such a country we shall exult to be the children, and we pledge to it an attachment, veneration, and support which can be accorded only to a virtuous community.

"It is our happiness that we live in an age when many noble schemes of benevolence have been accomplished, — when the idea of a great amelioration of human affairs is no longer rejected as a dream of fancy, — when statesmen are beginning to learn that all nations have a common interest, — when philanthropy is extending its views to distant countries, and is executing purposes which would once have been regarded as the offspring of a blind and extravagant zeal. In this age of enlarged views, of generous excitement, of unparalleled activity for the good of mankind, it is

hoped that the idea of a nation espousing the cause of peace and humanity will not be dismissed as visionary and impracticable. Enlightened and benevolent statesmen will discern that we do not live in ordinary times, but that a new and powerful impulse has been given to the human mind, which, under judicious influence, may issue in great and permanent improvements of the social state.

"In presenting this memorial, we solemnly declare, in the presence of God, that we have no private or narrow views. On this subject we belong to no sect, no party. As lovers of our country, as friends of mankind, as disciples of Jesus Christ, with the spirit of peace in our breasts, and with a deep impression of the miseries of war, we are only solicitous to prevent the effusion of human blood by human hands, and to recall men to the conviction that they are brethren. We trust that the warmth with which we have spoken will not be construed into a want of deference towards our rulers. On such a subject, coldness would be a crime. Our convictions are deep, and no language but that of zeal and earnestness would do them justice.

"We hope that we are addressing rulers who are sensible to the responsibility imposed by the possession of power, who regard the influence which is granted them on human affairs as a solemn trust, who consider themselves as belonging to their country and to mankind, and who desire to treasure up for themselves consolations in that hour when human applause will be an unavailing sound, and when no recollection will be so dear as that of having aided with a disinterested zeal the cause of peace and humanity."

The second paper is a letter to Mr. Worcester, in which he refers to the war against the Seminoles, — a war that, undertaken, as it was, by a strong and professedly Christian and civilized nation against a scattered remnant of Indians, because they offered a retreat to

slaves who had escaped from our oppression, and with an ulterior desire of robbing them of their lands, was certainly a concentration of all mean cruelties.

"The Seminole business has been disposed of by Congress, and I have no wish that our society should enter the lists with government. But may not the subject be treated usefully in this way? Let us allow, for the sake of the argument, that the majority are right in construing the laws of war. Let us then state distinctly, and without any exaggeration, the acts of General Jackson, which they say are justified by these laws. May we not then bring home to men's minds the question, whether the time has not come for repealing such horrible laws? If war demands such regulations or outrages to accomplish its ends, can war too soon be abolished? We may say, that Congress have authorized all future commanders to exercise the same dreadful discretion in war. If so, is it not time to exert ourselves to prevent the recurrence of this infernal state of things? It seems to me, you may turn to good account the decision in Congress, without combating it. I wish this occasion to be made use of. The recital of the transactions of this 'justifiable war,' and comments upon it, may furnish matter for the number, — and I believe the public have not these facts before them in a connected series."

We have already seen the strong detestation with which Mr. Channing regarded one of the basest outrages of war, — if, indeed, any degree of more or less can be found in the guilt of its inhuman practices, — namely, *privateering*. But so much had he at heart the extinction of this barbarous custom, that it is but just to him, by yet further quotations, to make his sentiments known. In the sermon on the peace, from which extracts have been given, he thus speaks: —

"May we not hope that mercantile transactions will no longer fly the day, and that the lip of perjury will be closed? Let us especially bless God that peace will sweep the legalized plunderer from the ocean, that privateering will no longer violate all the better feelings of our nature, that the ocean will be the pathway of upright and honorable enterprise instead of depraving warfare, and that we shall bear our part in dispensing over the earth the bounties of Providence."

The following letter to Mr. Worcester shows the mode by which he proposed to awaken the national conscience to the enormity of this system of authorized piracy.

"*Boston, February* 22, 1819.

"—— communicated to me your memorial relating to privateering. We agreed in the belief that no good would result, but that some evil might, from presenting it to our legislature. I will talk to you fully on this point when we meet, — and will only say now, that, such is the relation of this Commonwealth to the general government, that our best friends in the legislature might doubt the expediency of such an application to Congress as you propose, and might seem, by declining to act with us, to favor privateering. May I suggest another mode of reaching our end? May not a memorial to Congress on the subject be circulated through *the whole* country, so that at the next session the voice of the friends of peace and humanity may be heard from every State, entreating the adoption of measures which may hasten the abolition of this abominable custom through the Christian world? May not peace-societies be used for spreading this memorial, as well as the meetings of the Friends' religious associations?"

The caution blended with humane enthusiasm, so apparent in this last letter, is yet more clearly manifested in

another on a kindred topic, — the abolishing of the savage usage of punishing the rash and hidden crime of private murder by public murder coolly committed, and sanctioned by judicial, executive, and religious proprieties. It is addressed also to Mr. Worcester, who, in consistency with his ruling principle, was seeking the destruction of the gallows.

" We must not alarm men by the appearance of adopting plans for the amelioration of mankind without deliberation. We must not bring forward too many schemes, *even if judicious, at the same moment.* This is the way to raise a host of prejudices. We must proceed gradually. Your labors for peace will, I hope, be blessed, and a life devoted to this object and to the diffusion of a more candid spirit among Christians will be worthily and nobly spent. The time may come for the discussion which you wish to bring before the public; but just at this moment, when there seems to be a fear that philanthropy is going too far, I am inclined to defer it. If you will trust me to write a piece on the subject of capital punishment, showing the difficulties which attend it, and the great principles by which all punishments should be regulated, I will do it. I have thought a little about it; and I am persuaded that the immediate object should be not so much to *abolish capital punishments*, as to strike at *the root of the evil*, at that corruption of society which renders severe punishments necessary, and to enforce on the community the obligation of introducing modes of punishment most suited to reform offenders. I fear that the cause of humanity might suffer by abolishing capital punishments, unless there should be *a simultaneous introduction* of modes of punishment more efficacious than would be left on our present system."

In addition to the promotion of peace and a reform in

penitentiary discipline and punishments, other philanthropic movements also engaged Mr. Channing's sympathy and aid. As early as 1816, he preached a discourse upon Temperance, which his society urgently requested him to print as a tract for general circulation. In the missionary enterprise, too, he was much interested, and brought the demands of this cause impressively before his people. Indeed, so much did he feel the importance of this sublime effort to link the race of man into one whole, of which Christendom should be the heart, — by streams of piety, intelligence, and love sent out to circulate through the body of material intercourse which commerce was forming, — that, according to a declaration once made to a friend, he was on the point of breaking all his social ties and devoting himself to the work. Infirm health, however, and the pressure of the immediate duties in which he was engaged forbade. But through life he cherished a strong conviction of the high claims of missionary labors, while at the same time he was ever becoming more earnest to cleanse the fountain, by making the whole life of Christendom, national, commercial, domestic, individual, more truly Christian.

This desire of evangelizing mankind was closely connected with another movement, just rising into notice, which we now proceed to mention. The era of peace then dawning on the world interested Mr. Channing, by the opportunity which it afforded for uniting Christians more closely in common labors of beneficence. He saw everywhere, as he thought, the signs of a revival of a life of holiness and love. In his sermon at the "Solemn Festival" he had said, —

"This reaction in favor of religion and virtue will, we trust, continue and increase. Amidst the sufferings and privations

of war, a generous spirit for *the diffusion of the Scriptures* has broken forth; and at this moment that sacred volume, which infidelity hoped to bury in forgetfulness with the mouldering records of ancient superstition, is more widely opened than in any former age to the nations of the earth."

Thus are we brought to consider his connection with the world-wide movement for the distribution of the Bible. In 1811 he had delivered the first anniversary address before the Bible Society of Massachusetts, and from 1812 to 1820 he filled the most important office in the society, that of Chairman of the Executive Committee. The annual reports prepared by him were ample. They were regularly printed, and became an important auxiliary in promoting the objects of the society. A few extracts from these reports will show the position which this movement occupied in his regards.

1813. "No sincere Christian can need arguments to convince him that he is bound to contribute to the diffusion of Christianity through the world. This is a religion designed for all nations. Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to preach it to every creature under heaven, and shall *we* do nothing in aid of this great design? Is the gospel the appointed instrument of God for restoring the world to purity and peace? Has the Son of God died to impart this invaluable blessing to our race? Have holy men of all ages toiled and suffered to spread it through the earth, and to perpetuate it to unborn generations; and shall *we* do nothing to extend the knowledge and power of the word of eternal life? . . . . .

"In the present convulsed and disordered state of the world, it is most consoling and cheering to see so many Christians, of different countries and different denominations, forgetting their divisions, and uniting in one great effort for making

known the Scriptures to every nation under heaven. Like the rainbow in a dark and stormy sky, this is a promise of a brighter and happier day. It is suited to carry forward our thoughts to that predicted period, when the knowledge of God shall fill the earth, and all nations be joined in love to their common Father and Redeemer, and to one another. We should rejoice that it is the design of Prov idence to effect this revolution by the instrumentality of Christians, and we should esteem it our privilege and happiness that we may bear a part in this inexpressibly sublime and merciful work of God."

1815. "We are now brought to a subject which has awakened peculiar interest. In our last report we informed you that the sum of £157. 2*s*. 9*d*. sterling had been raised, chiefly in this metropolis, and transmitted to the British and Foreign Bible Society for the purpose of repairing the injury done to that society and to the cause of Christian charity by the unworthy conduct of the owners or agents of an American privateer, who had captured and sold, and thus scattered through our country, a number of Bibles shipped from England for charitable distribution in the neighbouring British provinces. A letter from Lord Teignmouth, the President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, addressed to your Corresponding Secretary, and expressing the gratitude of that society, has been received; and we are happy to insert it in this report; not because we consider this transaction as entitled to the commendation which his Lordship has bestowed; not because we have the least desire to obtain the praise of generosity for what we deemed an act of justice, and a faint acknowledgment of respect to that munificent society, which has made the whole Christian world its debtor; but because we delight to record so striking an example of the spirit of Christianity counteracting and triumphing over the spirit of war.

We have ever esteemed it one of the happiest effects of Bible Societies, that they tend to unite Christians of all nations, and it is our hope that they will awaken in Christians universally so strong a sense of the near relation which they sustain to each other, and of their obligations to mutual love and kindness, that wars between communities which profess the religion of Christ will be more and more abhorred, as most unnatural, and altogether irreconcilable with the holy and pacific name which they bear.

"The great sentiment, that Christians of all nations are brethren and friends, united by ties which war cannot dissolve, and bound to labor together for the promotion of peace and holiness, must be carried with power to every heart by the perusal of this letter. May the time soon arrive when Christians of every nation will speak on this subject in a language which every government will be forced to hear and obey.....

"It is also with great pleasure that we are able to state that your society has received, since the last anniversary, a large and valuable accession of members;* and we confidently anticipate, that, among the other fruits of peace and returning prosperity, an increasing patronage will be extended to an institution which proposes to Christians of every name an object which all must acknowledge most worthy of their bounty.

"Another cause of congratulation remains to be mentioned. We refer to the encouraging intelligence from so many parts of this country and of Europe, of the multiplication, activity, and success of institutions for the distribution of the Scriptures. The spirit of Christian charity seems to gather strength from exertion. Never, perhaps, since the first age of Christianity, has a holier zeal existed than at the present moment for the moral and religious improvement of man-

* The whole number of members is 432.

kind. The British and Foreign Bible Society, that full and living fountain, is still sending forth its streams of truth and consolation; and distant nations, whom once no bond but interest connected, are now uniting in prayers and labors for the communication of the gospel to every creature under heaven.

"At such a period the excitements to Christian exertion are peculiarly strong. A voice seems to reach us from every part of Christendom, calling us to strengthen the hands and to share the honor of our brethren in extending that truth which has been the object of affection and hope to the pious and benevolent of past ages, and which we are assured is appointed to have free course and to be glorified, until it shall fill the earth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

1816. "Never before was so generous an impulse communicated to so many hearts. Never, since the first promulgation of Christianity, has so sublime a spectacle been exhibited as that which we now witness of Christians in both hemispheres, separated by language, climate, manners, and oceans, forgetting their distinctions, and conspiring as brethren in the work of illuminating the world. Perhaps human history affords no example of such extensive coöperation for the good of mankind.

"From such institutions, founded by the most illustrious men, patronized by sovereigns, endowed by opulence, and inspired and sanctified by ardent love of God and mankind, are we not authorized to hope a melioration of the moral and religious condition of society? May we not anticipate a more wide and glorious manifestation of the power of Christianity on the hearts of men? May we not especially hope, that Christian nations, being thus united under the peaceful standard of the cross, and laboring and triumphing together in the cause of their common Lord, will drink more

largely into his spirit, will exchange their animosities for love, and will shrink with horror from the thought of devoting each other to slaughter and desolation? "

Mr. Channing was interested, not only in extending the circulation of the Bible, but in promoting a rational and consistent interpretation of it. During this and the later portion of his life he gave much time and thought to the elevation of theological learning. This will appear more fully hereafter; but a few hints come here in place, which may indicate his progressive career of thought, and show his ready faithfulness to every call upon his energies. Immediately after the death of Buckminster, who for his age was undoubtedly the best read and most accomplished theological scholar in the country, and who had been chosen the first lecturer on the Dexter Foundation in the Divinity School at Cambridge, Mr. Channing was selected to fill that office. This was in 1812. He accepted the appointment, bought a portion of the very valuable library which his lamented friend had with great care and expense collected, sent abroad for various books from Germany and England, and began to make preparations for these new and difficult duties. He was pleased with the prospect of usefulness thus opened, though diffident of his fitness for the work. But he soon found that his health was entirely inadequate for the efforts to which he saw that a conscientious professor was summoned, who in the unsettled state of theological science undertook to be a guide, and in 1813 he resigned his trust. He retained a close relation, however, to the Divinity School, and became thenceforward one of its most active guardians, as is conclusively shown in many letters and manuscripts. The careful meditation which he ha-

bitually turned upon an institution so important in every view to the well-being of the churches will appear by a few extracts from his private papers.*

"It is essential to a good institution that one spirit should pervade it, and that all its parts should harmonize. The balance between the intellect and the affections, or rather their joint action, should be most sedulously provided for. The Christian character, the spirit of Christ, as the *ultimate in religion*, should be presented in all its brightness. Whatever draws the mind from this is injurious. Zeal, self-denial, devotion to God and Humanity is the *essential*. The general course of instruction should tend to produce these. Speculations awakening skepticism, or undue exercise of intellect, should be avoided. Great *principles*, on which religious sentiment and practice rest, should be strongly, frequently offered to attention. The mind needs progress. Difficulty is its stimulus. But should it not be active chiefly in analyzing the true, in working on what is substantial, in building on a foundation, in developing the causes and connections of what is known to be real? To determine what proportion of time should be given to points which have mocked the efforts of the wisest men in all ages, and which are yet agitated and under debate, requires great judgment."

"Young men who are merely students, self-indulgent, stimulated by the desire of literary distinction, accustomed to regard the profession as a road to eminence, and feeding selfish thoughts, are not the fit materials for a good ministry. Manners, knowledge of the world, taste, wide range of thought, must be reconciled with and pervaded by spirituality, self-renunciation, independence, strong action of practical piety, warm and patient interest in the neglected, outcast, poor, sinful."

* See also the Tract "On Increasing the Means of Theological Education," &c., 1816, Works, Vol. V., pp. 363 - 371.

"The *end* of the ministry should be set before them with great plainness, the *vastness of the change* which it is intended to work in society and individuals. They should be affected deeply with the condition of society, with the conviction that its state is exceedingly remote from that which Christianity is designed to bring in. Their minds should be quickened by the faith that a great change is *practicable*. Tameness grows from the thought of going on for ever in the steps of the past. The attention of theological students should be turned more on the state of the world, less on abstract subjects; a lively interest in its progress should be aroused. They should feel as men set apart to produce a reform in the moral condition of mankind. The miseries of the *mass of men*, their toils, ignorance, sufferings, temptations, should touch them. Study should be seen to be a means only. How can a theological institution be made to give to its students the advantage, which students in law and medicine have, of seeing the actual application of principles, the profession illustrated in practice? Study conducted under the influence of sympathy with men would be vastly more efficient."

"The present course of training is too technical. It does not communicate a living spirit. A tone of feeling should pervade the institution, so that new students may at once imbibe it. Fervor should be a primary object. The intellect would gain force and largeness from such spiritual excitement. The first lesson to the students should be, that, in order to *communicate*, they must *receive* and be *filled with* the spirit of Christianity. Living Christianity should be the end. It is true that this spirit cannot be poured into them. They must be excited to seek it for themselves. But this must be presented as their most indispensable acquisition. The understanding of religion is exceedingly important; but moral and religious truth is best understood by the moral and religious culture of the soul. The true spirit of study

is needed, an earnest desire to look into the deep things of religion from accordance of heart with its sublime realities."

"Fixed meditation must be encouraged, — a deep pervading sense of the presence and perfection of God, — a wakeful spirit of prayer, — a strong conviction of the reality of the future life, — a devotion to the cause of Christ, identification of all their plans, purposes, and hopes with it, and a sense of the infinite importance of Christianity, — a reverence for the human soul, its greatness, worth, perils, prospects, — a vivid perception of the high spiritual purpose of our religion, — a distinct conception of the celestial virtue which it is designed to cherish, — a love deep and disinterested for elevation of soul and the zeal which personal experience of the power of religion gives, — courage, hardihood, and a martyr's patience, — a correspondence to the most earnest spirit of the age; — these habits of mind and heart will form men of the sacred character which we need, and fit them to be sources of spiritual life to society."

"Can indifference be preserved in a teacher? Is it not in human nature to state our own opinions with greater clearness than those of others? A teacher should affect no secrecy; it is best that his views should be fully understood. The pupil left alone is not more likely to discover truth than when guided. It is not the statement of his own opinions which renders a teacher dangerous, but an unwillingness on his part to allow students impartially to examine them. He should state fairly the arguments in favor of his own views, but he should exert no authority or influence to prevent his pupils from weighing them with perfect freedom. He should direct them to the sources of inquiry, and present them with the means of forming a right judgment, rather than attempt to mould their opinions. Let him make known the opposing views, and refer them to authors who defend them. And while urging his own convictions, let him caution students against receiving them because they are his.

We do not wish a theological instructer to form young men after the pattern of his system. The promotion of Christian truth is the end. No teacher is infallible. He should never pretend to be so."

"Our institution is distinguished by this. It does not aim to teach the peculiarities of any sect, but to encourage serious, free, honest, well-directed inquiry. This is our end, — to inspire the students with a resolute, impartial temper in the pursuit of truth. Our fundamental principle is, that men may preach with equal faithfulness who differ on disputed points; that character — the living spirit — is the great thing. We do not wish to form a sect. In theological institutions there is danger that monotony of mind will be communicated, that all will learn to think alike, that there will be want of liberality, impartiality. Let a habit of fair investigation be encouraged, let all minds be taught to examine questions deliberately, to pause before coming to a decision. Our pledge against the abuse of liberty is to be found in a devout, humble, reverential spirit."

But it was not alone by his desire to give a pure, large, and practical tone to theological studies, that Mr. Channing was brought into active coöperation with the educational movements of the day. In 1813, he had been chosen a member of the Corporation of Harvard University, the duties of which office he continued to discharge for thirteen years. During this period he took an efficient part in all plans for the improvement of the course of instruction and discipline in the College. Voluminous notes remain to prove with what comprehensive and minute attention he made himself acquainted with the condition, wants, dangers, opportunities of the students, and with what discriminating sympathy he lent his aid to every proposed reform. One or two extracts from

these papers may be of interest, as showing his general views.

"Cannot religious and moral means of influence be made to enter more largely into the college system, and give it character? Religion should be professedly and conspicuously a main end of education. Piety should be held forth as an essential element of high character in every young man. Literary emulation cannot supply sufficient motive. We corrupt the young, and weaken their best principles, by exclusive use of so low a principle. Knowledge should always be presented as valuable only when inspired with and controlled by high principle. The mind should be turned to God as the fountain of intelligence, and all growth in wisdom should be seen to be an approach toward him and a preparation for the fulfilment of his designs of good. Religion must be exhibited as the glory of our nature. An ingenuous, magnanimous, heroic form of piety must be inculcated, such as is fitted to win the generous hearts of youth. Religion still has a monkish, gloomy, formal, superstitious air. It is made a master, not a friend, in the eyes of the young. It is presented to them in the aspect of debasing terror, not of elevating and enlarging hope. They should be made to feel that it is the source of all lofty, honorable, manly sentiment. Its connection should be shown with harmonious and balanced character, with noble aspiration, self-devotedness, grand endeavour, courage, independence. There should be a religious teacher, who can present broad and generous views of religion in accordance with our whole nature, who can converse freely with the young men, visit them, attract them to him, and meet the deep wants which spring up in some minds at this season of life.....

"Religious character, profound moral feelings, a strong spirit of Christian piety and love, are all-important qualifi-

cations in the governors and instructers of college, so that they may be pervaded by an earnest conviction of the supreme importance of cultivating religion and virtue in their pupils, and may constantly show that religion is not a mechanical thing with them, not a means of discipline, but a grand and living reality. Without this, intellect will be too exclusively the object, and the great end of intellectual power and wealth will not be sufficiently brought into view. Virtue should be seen by the students to be the paramount object. No amount of talent or acquisition should be allowed to be a substitute for want of morality. Character should be regarded as the primary interest. There should be a kind but inflexible demand for purity and goodness. A student should be made to feel that every moral taint is disgraceful, base, abhorrent."

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION. "In forming a system of education for the University, whilst the highest respect should be paid to experience, important aid may be derived from the general principles of education. One of these principles, which deserves peculiarly to be called fundamental, we propose to consider, and to show some of its applications.

"The principle referred to is this, — that in education the great object is not so much to communicate knowledge, as to train the mind, to exercise its various faculties, to give it the free and vigorous use of its powers, to inspire it with a love of truth, and to form it to patient, quick, and keen investigation. This doctrine seems universally admitted, and according to this the principal aim of a good teacher is not to fix in the memory knowledge which others have discovered, but to make the student as active as possible in discovering it himself, or in proving and establishing it, and in following it into its results. The more the student advances without aid, the better; he must be helped to dispense with help; and learn to go alone and draw from his own *resources.*

"This method of teaching will, in the end, communicate a far greater amount of knowledge than others, in which the mind is more passive; because the student learns in proportion to the interest which he takes in a subject, and a vastly stronger interest is generated by active inquiry than by a passive reception of others' ideas. Activity of mind on a subject gives a true and enduring property in what we learn about it, and the memory grasps firmly what the higher faculties have labored to acquire.

"The present mode of teaching is chiefly by *recitation*, or by making the student give the ideas of the text-book; and, although this is less fitted than any other mode to call forth mental action, it still confirms the principle we are illustrating; for the chief use of recitation is to excite the student to solitary labor, and he gains in this way incomparably more than from the communications of his instructers. The assurance that strict scrutiny will be made into his acquaintance with the prescribed portion of the text-book stimulates him to study it; and if he have tolerable capacity, he generally possesses himself so completely of his author's ideas, as to need little or no explication from the teacher.

"The chief use of the instructer is to make the student his own instructer, and the fruits of his unaided application in his closet are incomparably more valuable than all the assistance or knowledge which he gets from the lips of a master.

"Recitation, however, though to a certain extent useful, is not, as we have said, the mode of teaching most fitted to call forth the mind, and the advancement of the University depends on nothing so much as on introducing or extending methods more adapted to this end.

"It should be a leading aim of the teacher to raise out of his branch topics for inquiry or discussion, — subjects on which the student's power of analysis, comparison, discrim-

ination, generalization, or invention may be employed. It should not satisfy him, that the ideas of the text-book have been received; their truth should be inquired into; objections to them should be stated or invited; the habit of weighing proofs should be cultivated; and, in general, the student's mind should be made to look as much as possible on the subject of study.

"Some brief examples may illustrate the modes of teaching which are thought most important. — In *mathematics* the student should be assisted and encouraged to furnish his own demonstrations of propositions, and, among different methods of demonstration, he should give reasons for preferring one to another. The discovery of a new series of proofs should be rewarded with particular distinction. The uses and applications of this branch of knowledge, its history, &c., may furnish topics suited to increase the interest in it. In *experimental philosophy* the students should be invited to suggest or invent experiments by which any natural law may be established. In studying nature, generally, nature should be as much as possible the text-book, and the student led to read it for himself. Questions should be continually raised as to the causes of the common changes and appearances of nature. To make the mind active on natural phenomena, to accustom it to reduce all which it sees to general laws, to give it an interest in discovering the great ends and connections of this glorious creation, — these should be the aims of the teacher. In teaching *astronomy*, the student should be more conversant with the heavens. Many students learn from books the situations, distances, and other relations of the planets, without being able to distinguish one planet from another. They hardly know one constellation and, what is still worse, the vastness, splendor, and sublime movements of the universe are obscured, if not virtually hidden from the mind, through the habit of studying it almost exclusively in an

apparatus which is infinitely mean and disproportioned, and has no power of exciting the soul.

"*Logic* teaches the application of the faculties to the discovery of truth. It should be taught practically. The students should be made to find or invent examples of every species of evidence and sophism, to analyze processes of reasoning, to point out false reasoning and show how the mind was betrayed into it, to point out the different modes of investigation belonging to different subjects, and to inquire into the history of the processes by which the most important discoveries have been made. *Intellectual philosophy* is a still closer case. The subject here being a man's own mind, and the highest evidence being consciousness, the student should be turned to his own breast, and taught to consult this as his chief text-book. In the *classics*, endless topics offer to lead the student to investigations of the principles of language and criticism, and to the exercise of taste; and, what is equally important, he may be led into an intimacy with the spirit and institutions of antiquity, with the influences under which men then wrote and acted, and by which character was determined. In *history*, the chief aim should be to teach how history should be read, to point out the sources of historical knowledge and the marks of historical truth and falsehood, to accustom the mind to weigh historical evidence, to teach the application of history to the sciences of human nature and *politics*, and to exercise the moral sense on characters and actions. Once more, in *rhetoric*, the student should select from authors examples of every kind of figure and composition, &c., &c. — Perhaps these illustrations are too extended, and yet they are only imperfect hints of the methods which may be used in every branch to awaken and call forth mind.

"It may be said that this is a kind of teaching for which the mass of the students are not ripe, and this is not without

foundation. There are many of whom nothing more can be expected than a knowledge of the text-book, and let these be thoroughly and patiently drilled. But there are some fitted for the higher kind of instruction here recommended, and perhaps a considerable number to whom it may be applied in one or a few branches. A leading aim with the instructers should be to make this instruction an object of desire, interest, and competition, and such it would naturally become. It would form the broadest of all distinctions among the students, and, when understood in the community, would be referred to in preparing youth for college.

"This system of course requires *classification according to capacity;* and without such classification, it is conceived that no important change can be effected in the University. As long as the present system is maintained, of giving the same amount of study to all the students, and of adapting it to the average of talents, so long the standard of requisitions and attainments will be low, or it will rise slowly, and we shall be surpassed by wiser institutions. The constant aim of the friends of the University should be to make it worthy of that name, to perfect the system of education, to obtain justly the reputation of training youth more generously than any other establishment in the country; and for this end instruction must be given adapted to the highest minds. One effect of this will be to raise the average of capacity. We shall attract those who are fitted to receive a higher and more extensive education than can be gained elsewhere, and a standard of intellectual effort and acquisitions will be formed in the College, to which the great body of students will labor to attain. A single section educated on new and better principles would exert an influence on the whole mass.

"Great good is to be anticipated from such a method of instruction, if we consider the influence it would have on

the teachers. The character of the teachers determines that of an institution. They must not only be men of talent, but must have that talent awakened, called forth, made manifest. They must bring a strong interest to their work, and of course their work must be of a nature suited to excite interest. Now the employment of hearing a class recite, for the purpose of ascertaining the acquaintance of the students with a text-book, is certainly a dull one. It is a schoolmaster's employment, which is among the most irksome. To go the same dull round with a succession of classes, to hear the same thoughts repeated year after year from a most familiar book, this certainly should not form the exclusive or principal occupation of a man of talent. We cannot wonder that torpor should creep into such an employment, and if the teacher be torpid, whence is the scholar to gather life and energy? We have seen that the great end of the teacher is to awaken the mind of the student to vigorous exertion. His own, then, must act with vigor. A wearisome, mechanical listening to a recitation is not the way to kindle curiosity, to inspire a thirst for truth, to give a keen interest in the objects of study. The proposed mode of instruction, in which the student's powers of investigation and judgment will be tasked to the utmost, in which discussion will mingle with recitation, in which the expression of doubts and difficulties will be encouraged, and in which the teacher will be called to act on suggestions, examples, proofs, objections from the pupil, would furnish to a man of talent a field not unworthy of his power, would keep his mind alive, would cause it to be seen, felt, and respected by the students, and would give it a new and quickening agency on theirs. This influence on the teachers, and an increase of animation and spirit in the whole institution, may also be expected from the new and multiplied text-books of the highest character in every department of literature, which would successively be introduced

in consequence of a higher kind of instruction, of the system of classification, and of the option which would be given to young men of talent who shall have finished the prescribed studies.

"As another motive for the mode of teaching here recommended, it may be observed that it involves one of the most important motives to intellectual effort. It will give to the student the *pleasure* of *successful* application of the intellect, the pleasure of attaining truth by his own activity, — a motive more steady and enduring, and more friendly to intellectual excellence, than emulation.

"In these remarks we have not intended to speak disparagingly of recitation. In the beginning of college life they ought to be frequent, and cannot be too searching, and there will always be students of an advanced standing who can learn only from a text-book. But there are many students capable of a higher mode of teaching, and to these the recitations necessary for the former are waste of time and a heavy burden. The principles here laid down admit of extensive application. They may aid us in judging of the utility of public lectures and of the best means of profiting by them. They may show the importance of frequent compositions on the subjects taught at college, and of cultivating more than we do a ready command of thought and expression."*

The sympathy thus for ever radiating to the interests of society at large did not exhaust Mr. Channing's love, which shone only brighter and warmer, the nearer the sphere of its action to its central source. He was still a practical philanthropist. Physical debility

* These remarks were probably written after the author's return from Europe; but as they sum up the results of his observation and experience at this period, it is thought better to insert them here.

had gradually warned him, it is true, to confine his personal activity within narrower limits than he had marked out in his earlier ministry, and the whole tendency of events had been to teach him that his more peculiar and appropriate function was to be a discoverer and announcer of spiritual principles. But proof enough remains that the benevolence which we have noticed in his spring-time had become the confirmed and unconscious habit of his summer. Indeed, where disinterestedness survives the frosts, by which the bleak airs of a world, made selfish through isolation and competition, nip the buds of kindness in so many a young enthusiast, it cannot but bear full fruits in manhood. He became constantly more guarded in his charities, and there is no need to lift the veil which, with true delicacy of feeling, he wore, like a brother of the Misericordia, as he went about on his errands of mercy. But as a fact tells more of a man's temper than any number of general assertions, we feel at liberty to give, in passing, one illustration of his modes of action. Thus writes a recipient of his bounty.

"I ought to see the good hand of God continually stretched out, but some such special providences strike my mind with peculiar power. Were I to tell you my situation, your conviction would brighten, that the hearts of all men are in the hand of the Lord. For a number of days previous to receiving your letter, our barrel of meal and cruse were reduced to nothing, and I had called on a number for help, but could not obtain it. I borrowed a horse, and set out with a determination to procure some necessaries for my family, even if by increasing my debts. On looking into my desk, I found only three cents, which I took with *me.* In passing through the town, I stopped at the post-

office to put in a letter, when the postmaster informed me that there was a letter there for me. I thought within myself, 'How shall I pay for it with three cents?' when, lo! a letter is handed me post-paid. 'Generous friend!' said I. I opened it, and was at first surprised by the bill. But after reflection, I said to my companion, 'See what the Lord can do!' Though the money gave us joy, when thinking of the unknown benefactor, whom God had enabled and disposed thus to contribute to unworthy strangers; yet the matter of the letter, distilled from the heart of the writer, gave us much higher joy. When paying my debts, which I was thus enabled to do, and procuring some necessaries, we could not refrain from mentioning this kind providence. I hope there was nothing wrong in this, as we read that what a certain woman did for Christ was to be told as a memorial of her."

To every form of public charity Mr. Channing lent his ready counsel and encouragement; but it was chiefly within his own congregation that he was earnest to secure efficient union for purposes of mutual culture and coöperative usefulness. With this view, he, in 1817, addressed the following letter to the Committee of the Society in Federal Street.

"Gentlemen: — It has pleased a kind Providence to smile on the religious society with which we are connected. The present ought to be gratefully acknowledged by us as a period of prosperity, and it seems to me a peculiarly proper one for accomplishing some valuable objects by which both we and our children may be improved.

"I have for some time thought that a vestry-hall, or small building, belonging to the Society, and placed as near the church as may be, would be a great accommodation and benefit. The uses of it are as follows: —

"1. It would be a convenient place for *catechizing* and instructing the children of the Society, — a service for which the church furnishes very poor accommodations, especially in winter.

"2. It would give us a place for a *singing-school*, which is very much needed. Though our singing is very much improved, we all of us feel that it might be rendered a more interesting part of public worship. If we had a vestry attached to the church, I think that several persons might meet in it to receive instruction, who would not attend a public school. Besides, there might be weekly or monthly meetings of those of the Society who are acquainted with singing, for purposes of improvement and gratification.

"3. It is known to the Committee, I presume, that a *charity school* has been supported by contributions from our Society and the New South Church, an admirable institution, and conducted in part by young ladies of our church. I am very desirous of giving perpetuity to this truly Christian establishment, and I conceive that this will be effected, if we provide a building in which the school may be kept.

"4. There is also a *Sunday school*, just commenced, for which a vestry would be highly desirable.

"5. If this plan is adopted, a place will be provided for *meetings of the church*, or of other parts of the Society, for which the common place of worship is too large. The young ladies of the Society have been accustomed to meet for the purpose of being instructed by their pastor. I should wish, if a suitable place were provided, to meet the young men also for the same purpose.

"6. I have a strong impression that a *collection of the most approved books* on moral and religious subjects would be a great and lasting benefit to our Society. Such books, it is well known, have an important influence on the character, especially of the young, and yet they are far from being common among us. Perhaps the extent of the de-

ficiency would surprise you. There are some families of our number, in which individuals may be found with a strong taste for reading, but who cannot afford to purchase any but the most necessary books. In the families of the opulent, too, there are often but few books suited to illustrate the Scriptures, and to furnish religious instruction, and these few are often far from being the best. This deficiency is not to be supplied by circulating libraries, for they contain hardly any thing but works of an amusing nature. Even where a disposition exists to purchase useful publications on moral and religious subjects, the wish is sometimes frustrated, either by mistakes as to the merits of books, or by the inability of obtaining the best in this country. Some of the most valuable works must be sent for to Europe, because the demand is not sufficient to justify booksellers in importing or reprinting them. These considerations persuade me that we cannot easily render greater service to the Society than by laying the foundation of a library to which all classes shall have access. I believe that reading on religious subjects will be very much increased by it; that the attention of the young, which is now too often wasted on unprofitable books, will be drawn to the best authors; that a spirit of inquiry will be excited; that the Scriptures will be much better understood; that the minds of many will be enlarged; that Sunday will be spent with greater pleasure and profit; and that the instructions of the pulpit, aided by books which the preacher will recommend, will be more efficacious.

"These are important benefits, but these are not all. I would recommend, as a part of the plan, that the minister should be the librarian. The consequence of this will be, that his intercourse with all classes and ages of the Society will be increased, and his knowledge of the books which they are reading will furnish useful topics of conversation and advice. This effect, a closer union between the minis-

ter and people, seems to me very valuable. I believe, too, that a valuable collection of books, to which all the members of the Society may repair, as to a common fountain of instruction, will increase their interest in the Society and be a bond of union to each other. May I add, that to the present, and especially to future ministers, this collection will be of great use. Our salaries do not permit us to furnish ourselves, but very imperfectly, with books; and the liberty of using freely such a library as I propose will enable us to unfold many subjects more fully than at present to our hearers.

"Your friend and pastor."

In this project he had the cordial support of his wise and warm-hearted friend, the Hon. Judge Davis, who for so many years was the deacon of his Society and his invaluable counsellor, and the Society liberally contributed to fulfil the plan. The building was finished and opened in the autumn of 1818, on which occasion he made an address, from which a few sentences may be selected.

"It is pleasant to see a work of our hands completed, and especially a work which is the fruit and expression of friendly feelings, and which is a testimony of attachment to a good cause. Such is this building, founded in brotherly-kindness and a reverence for Christianity. It was reared by united efforts, and we have now met to set it apart by an act of devotion to purposes which our hearts approve.

"This building has already done good by the exercise which it has given to your liberality and to many pure sentiments. It is now doing good; for it is bringing us together as brethren, as members of the same Christian community. Yet more is it, we trust, to do good; for we have reared it for the advancement of Christianity, a religion which meets all our wants, sorrows, guilt, and fear, — which

opens its arms to infancy, and directs the ardent mind of youth to its Creator, which furnishes to our riper years motives to uprightness, which goes with us to the grave, and strengthens the sight to discern a brighter world beyond.

"One leading object of this building was, to provide for the religious instruction of children. I need not observe to you, that in our public services our children hear much which they cannot understand, and that they need more simple and direct instruction. If strength shall be given me, I shall engage in this work, I hope, with more earnestness than I have been able to do, though not without diffidence. The task is not as easy a one as many suppose. It is easier to convey knowledge to minds as ripe as our own, than to adapt ourselves to an age of which we preserve only indistinct recollections. There is, indeed, no labor in teaching children to repeat words; but to proportion our communications to their capacities, to bring the invisible God near to them, to excite them to thought, to touch their hearts, — these are objects which have not sufficiently been proposed in education, and we must advance towards them by a path of our own discovery. In this part of my duty, I hope that some of you will have the leisure and disposition to assist. I could wish that we might consider the religious education of the children of the Society a common end, to be talked of when we meet, and to be advanced by each other's observations and experiments. I dare not pledge myself for great exertion, but, if health permit, I should delight in making the trial, how far parochial may aid domestic instruction, in saving children from temptations, imbuing them with Christian principle, and, while they are yet tender and unfettered by habit, confirming their choice of a pious and virtuous life.

"It is also my hope to meet here the ladies of the Society whom I have been accustomed to assemble for the study of the Scriptures; and nothing would gratify me more

than to meet occasionally the young men for free conversation, or more regular instruction, on the subject of religion."

The meetings of ladies which are here referred to had been held by Mr. Channing for many years. One who was at this period his parishioner, and thenceforward to the end of his life an intimate and valued friend, Mrs. George Lee,* thus records her recollections of them.

"These meetings were usually held at the house of Mrs. Codman. They were intended for religious instruction and for awakening a just comprehension of religious duty. Mr. Channing opened the services by reading portions of the New Testament, which he commented upon in his lucid manner, throwing light upon obscure passages, and rousing his hearers' minds to their highest capacity of reflection. His observations were eminently fitted to inspire a devotional feeling, and shed abroad a spirit of prayer. The subjects selected were those which the whole tenor of his life and preaching inculcated, — unreserved love of our Heavenly Father, uncompromising obedience to his will, the surrender of the whole soul to his service, the unspeakable benefits received through the mission of his Son, the wisdom as well as beauty of holiness. It was by his fervent and exalted manner, that he prepared his auditors for the closing prayer; and when he arose, — for he addressed us seated, — and said with his solemn and impressive voice, 'Let us pray,' I am sure there was not a wandering heart amongst us.

"The meeting might be called one for social worship, a gathering round a domestic altar. The effect could not

* Author of Three Experiments of Living, The Huguenots in *France* and America, &c.

but be salutary. A few hours were redeemed from the cares and anxieties, the frivolities and conventional forms of life, and the mind called home and directed to its highest destination. The number of worshippers varied; but I should think there were usually fifty or more present. The meeting was designed for the females of his own Society, though others often requested the privilege of attending. I am happy to recall those pleasant days, and cannot be grateful enough that to the last I enjoyed the conversation of our beloved friend, and felt the influence of his life. Can I ever forget his calm, impressive tone ? "

Thus it appears that Mr. Channing was still an active pastor. But it was chiefly through his sermons that he exerted influence. His power in the pulpit had from the first been constantly increasing, and his full congregation was now often crowded by strangers, who gathered from various motives to hear one who was everywhere recognized as the most eloquent and effective preacher in Boston. His discourses occasioned by the great political crisis through which the country had been called to pass, from 1812 onwards, — the bold, original, and discriminating address on war in 1816, — his able publications in the Unitarian controversy, and especially his Baltimore sermon, delivered in 1819, of which several editions were at once printed, and which was circulated through the length and breadth of the land, — and, finally, the masterly Dudleian Lecture in 1821, in which so succinctly and glowingly he presented the evidences of Revealed Religion, had gradually established his position in the very first rank of the thinkers and scholars of the country; and at this time he was experiencing all the incentives and temptations of celebrity. That he was painfully conscious of the ensnaring power of the

ambition which a position of such eminence naturally engenders appears from the care with which in his journals he guards himself against its charms and strives to maintain the purest singleness of purpose. His private papers of this whole period are most affecting from their moral beauty ; but the reader turns his eye away from secrets which a mortal scarcely whispers to his own heart, and a feeling comes over him of the awful sanctity of that temple of the soul whereinto God's guardian angels only have befitting innocence to enter. It is enough to say, that conscience sat ever vigilant at the portal of his heart, like a father confessor, listening to hear the faintest breathings of remorse, to prescribe the needed penance, to give the blessed sign and word of absolution.

Yet from the piles of these documents, in which the writer's inmost experience is laid bare, as if he stood transparent in the very light of the all-penetrating eye, it seems but right to select a few of the less personal expressions of feeling and thought ; for there is no other way of showing the essential character of the man. The most striking intellectual peculiarity of these papers is their minute exhaustive analysis, — their spirit is devoutness. The writer takes up some disposition of which he is conscious, some branch of duty, some relation in life, some grand principle, some reality, and, holding it tenaciously before him, not only for a day or week, but, as dates clearly prove, for months and years, slowly elaborates a consistent and complete view. It is very interesting to compare the hints scattered in these loose sheets with the compact, finished form in which many of the thoughts finally appeared in the author's pub*lished* works. One gains thereby some insight of the

mode, whereby in the moral as in the natural world gems are formed, and precious metals deposited in the rocks. The profound conscientiousness, patience, earnest solemnity, concentrated strength, unity of this good man, thus become apparent; it is seen how weighty to his own mind was the meaning of his words, how sedulously he simplified the statement of his opinions, how through much struggle he attained to calm, even, equable utterance, how carefully he reserved what was most fresh, brilliant, novel, until assured of its substantial truth, — from what depth of experience he drew. From beginning to end, they mark the process by which an earth-born creature is through willing faith transfigured into an image, faint though it be, of divine disinterestedness. In the fragments which we select, suggestions as to the ministerial profession, the special calls of the times, his relations to his people, and his own peculiar duties, are so intermingled, that it would be useless to attempt to cast them anew into any formal mould. Evidently, to his own mind, his outward life and his inward thoughts were one.

"I should desire that knowledge which will conduce most to the salvation of my people. This sentiment is most favorable to enlarged views, and free and vigorous action of mind. A general loftiness of sentiment, independence on men, consciousness of good intentions, self-oblivion in great objects, clear views of futurity, thoughts of the blessed companionship with saints and angels, trust in God, as the friend of truth and virtue, — these are the states of mind in which I should live."

"Let me be very definite in the ends which I propose, when I converse, write, or preach, and let me keep them in view, and press forward to them. Let me appeal to God

for the truth and importance of every sentiment, and for my own sincere conviction, and my desire to impress it. Let me write with prayer, as on my knees, sensible of my dependence on the Divine Spirit for every good exercise, every right aim, every disinterested affection. Let me be satisfied with plain, serious, important truth, expressed perspicuously."

"Let me purpose, before I begin to write, some definite, serious impression which I wish to make, and pray for direction and sincerity. Let me lead a whole life of religion, humility, faith, devotion; for unless there be this general frame of character, no particular acts will be religious in spirit. The heart is always active, and builds up unawares the discourse of the speaker, turns his thoughts, fashions his expression. Let me in writing and reviewing hold intercourse with God, refer every word to his approbation, and consider whether I bear his message."

"Let me cultivate love, be continually setting before my mind views which will lead to disinterestedness, be continually engaged in some definite benevolent object. Let me labor through the week to keep alive a devotional sentiment, which may thus show itself unforced, and communicate itself to others on the Sabbath."

"Is my preaching attended with encouraging results? Do my people come to hear me to be pleased, or to be made better? Are they not rather attached to the man, than to the cause? Let me be more plain, urgent, importunate, tender. I am more and more sensible to the importance of an earnest, unaffected manner. I should lead my hearers home to their own hearts and lives, and preach searching sermons. I am not plain and forcible enough. I appeal too much to the ingenuous feelings. Men need also solemn, stern warnings. Religion must be presented to them as the end of life, the grand reality. Let me begin to write early enough in the week, so that I may throw my

whole soul into the close of my sermons. My work should be all in all. I should visit my people more freely, become a member of their families, know them, be known by them, win their confidence. The sight of every parishioner, and indeed of every human being, should be accompanied with the thought of the grandeur of a human soul, of the beauty, excellence, happiness to which every soul may attain, and the degradation and misery into which it may fall."

"A minister should feel that he is dispensing the truths of a religion introduced by a long line of prophets, sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ, designed to conduct men to all glory and excellence, to introduce a stupendous change in human affairs, to fill earth with the happiness of heaven. The idea of this grand change should be ever present to him. Nothing low should content him. To inspire elevated, disinterested piety should be his aim. He should *fill* his mind with the thought that man is destined to become the glorious image of God. He should live in a region of hope, he is to be distinguished by grandeur of aim, he should rise above human opinion and every influence which now bows down the faculties with solicitude, despondency, agitation, fear. Zeal to advance the great felicity to which Christ came to raise all men should animate him for ever. He should never think of rest, till this sublime end is accomplished. His whole intercourse should tend to exalt and animate men's conceptions and desires. All his influence should terminate in this *central* point, — that Christ came to call us to a true regeneration, to a celestial virtue; that much, very much, is to be sought, is to be gained. A diffusive philanthropy should be his habitual temper. He should view his people as a part of mankind specially intrusted to him, whom he is to arouse to co-operation in the great common work of promoting holiness and happiness throughout the earth. He must be warm, bold, efficient. The ends before him are infinite."

"Good preaching never enraptures an audience by beauties of style, elocution, or gesture. An easy, unbalanced, unlabored style should be the common mode of expression. This will give relief and prominence to more important parts, and insure variety. Composition should resemble nature. Dazzling objects soon fatigue the eye. Simple truth, in plain, perspicuous words, should form the body of the discourse, and all appeals of peculiarly solemnizing, melting, invigorating character should be introduced in the way of transition. By simple truth staleness and tameness are not meant, for there should always be richness of thought. A sermon should never be a barren sand-level of commonplaces, but a fresh, fertile field, verdant and well watered. In style, as in music, there should be a key, which should change with the topic. Let clearness, dignity, unstrained vigor, elevation without turgidness, purity without primness, pathos without whining, characterize my style. Let me study to be filled with the spirit of the truth I am to utter, and I shall speak as I ought. A slow, distinct, and rather low enunciation should form the ground of delivery. It is better to require exertion on the part of the hearer, than to stun him with clamor."

"That is the best preaching, which leads the audience to lose sight of the speaker in the sublimity of his themes, when the words and tones are forgotten, and the minds of all are awakened to the contemplation of grand realities. I wish to bring the kingdom of heaven near to men, to persuade them to lead devoted, pure, loving lives. How shall I thus persuade them? Not by violence, irritation, self-exaltation, enthusiasm, excess, — not by prejudicing my hearers against me as a fanatic, and exciting their opposition, — but by manifesting a calm, kind, humble, sincere, dispassionate state of heart, with clear views and direct purposes. Let me preach the whole truth plainly, earnestly, tenderly, but with self-possession. We should labor

to undeceive men, who are deluded by self-love and by fashion, satisfied by a hollow outside, decency of manners, ensnared by subtle temptations, and make them feel to the quick the need of a radical change, of integrity, purity, heavenly-mindedness. To do this, we must have the power to search the heart. We must be at once full of feeling, argumentative, comprehensive, particular. I ought to make every sermon practical by applying it to my own state in a continuous process of self-examination. *Permanent impression* is the test of good preaching. Hence individuality united with large principles is an essential requisite in a good sermon. Every hearer should feel that he is immediately interested in the truths which are taught, that then and there they apply directly to him."

"That which is often called *pulpit eloquence* is a mode of address calculated chiefly to warm the imagination and agitate the passions. But in preaching, the true end is not so much to produce some sudden effect, as to make impressions which will abide through life, to plant seeds which shall grow and ripen for ever. An impulse communicated to a popular assembly is short-lived. No *change of character* is produced by it. A preacher who habitually adopts this so-called eloquent manner may be a boast to his people and a wonder to strangers, but his real influence will be constantly lessening. He will be heard, admired, criticized, as an actor is, for the excitement he causes. And as he has not the advantage of a political declaimer, who can find ready stimulants for his audience in the national and local topic of the day, he will be forced to seek his charm in brilliant ornament and striking delivery, and will finally fall into verboseness, affectation, puerility, mysticism, extravagance. On the other hand, a preacher who wishes to interest his people for life must attract and fasten their regards upon the sacred subjects which he brings before them, and not upon his manner. He must awaken

in them a love of truth, of religious instruction, of spiritual improvement, of holiness. Then will their attention be unwearied and ever deepening. A minister who is listened to, at the very time when he has conspicuous defects in style and elocution, has a much fairer prospect of usefulness than many a brilliant orator, whom a congregation first hear with rapture, and then grow cold to. Attention, deep attention, is what is wanted in an audience; and the mode to excite it and keep it alive is to present great truths which fill their minds, and motives which inwardly prompt them to vigorous and constant action. A minister must himself, then, be engaged, alive, absorbed in great interests, profoundly convinced of the infinite importance of receiving Divine truth, and manifesting it in his whole life."

"I must urge that repentance which consists in realizing the entire obligation of the law of right, in feeling bound to render perfect obedience, in regarding all sin as inexcusable, in longing for a total deliverance from evil. Men must be made to abhor their sins, to be prostrated before the long-suffering benignity of God, to be humbled, melted, filled with shame at the thought of disobeying such an infinitely wise as well as merciful Being. It is important to set forth the law of God in all its sanctity, largeness, strictness, beauty, glory. It must be shown that the only satisfaction, peace, joy is in being conformed by Divine love to the image of God. This must be urged until men see and feel that all selfishness is a miserable, hopeless exile, till they love spiritual life as it is in God and angels, as the highest good, to be joyfully chosen above all things."

"When I propose a subject for a discourse, the question should be, How can I bring my mind into the state most favorable to clear understanding, deep impression, strong representation of it? But I should not labor while I write, nor work myself up into a fever inconsistent with calm,

humble dependence upon the Divine Spirit, and thoughtful, affectionate regard for those whom I am to address. There should be nothing strained or excessive, while seeking to place a subject in a light which will bring out new connections, and array it in attractive beauty. My whole mode of life should be a preparation for treating interesting themes in a fresh and animating way. In choosing a topic I should first view it in its connections, relations, position, as compared with other truths. I should then let it expand fully in my mind into all its branches and applications. From among these I should select the views most suited to the special end I have before me. Next, I should consider carefully the best method of arrangement; and in treating every head, my mind should be active to unfold the general thoughts involved in it in their relations to the main subject of the discourse. Every passage should be tested by its tendency to advance the end proposed. During the whole composition, I should be elevated by the greatness of truth, an ardent love of excellence, an active desire for the purity and salvation of man, a glowing piety, a conscious communion with God."

"In the regular course of the ministry, we have most to fear from mechanical sluggishness. Monotonous tameness is the sand-bar on which so many are stranded. The safety is in keeping the heart ever alive. The preacher must draw from his own full experience; he must never write as if writing was his business. The wish to be correct and elegant should never enter his thoughts. He has to penetrate men with great convictions. The Greeks wrote well, because the whole world of thought lay fresh and untouched before them. This should teach us not to form ourselves on models, not to use materials furnished by others, but to be enterprising in the exercise of our own minds, and in exploring the great sources of truth, — nature, man, revelation. There is a free, bold, vigorous tone of thought, the easy

action of a generous spirit, which is most desirable for every one to attain. All timidity of character, excessive accuracy, anxious observance of rules, desire to finish minute parts, love of glitter and polish, fondness of conceits, is fatal to this freedom. It is the natural movement of a sincere, ardent, independent mind. The preacher should never give his hearers leisure to admire; he should never permit them to doze. He should write with the ardor of strong conviction, trust himself to the flow of thoughts, and be unconstrained and unreserved."

"True eloquence springs from living perception of the truth, and from intimate communion with the hearts of men. We must not lean on opinion, must not fear the judgment of hearers. Dependence upon an audience is a charmed circle which represses all generous thought. Love of truth sets the writer free. The vigorous character of composition depends on the decision with which the mind grasps a truth. Eloquence is to be attained by the full culture, the general enriching, of the heart and mind. An enlarged spirit, which has reached grand convictions, will utter itself with a commanding style. There is never true eloquence, except when great principles and sentiments have entered into the substance of the soul, and become incorporated with the whole being. The way to be eloquent is to be possessed with truth. Good writing, good speaking, is that which grows directly from the heart, when expression becomes necessary from the fulness of the soul, when religion is a living principle within us, and the discourse is the spontaneous putting forth of this germinating seed. What is wanted is *genuine* feeling, inward *life*."

"One truth is the seed of other truths. It is sown in us to bear fruit, not to lie torpid. The power of mind, by which truth becomes prolific, is freedom. Our great duty is to encourage vigorous action of mind. The greater number of free and vigorous minds brought to bear upon a sub-

ject, the more truth is promoted. The wisest gain but glimpses. Nothing is seen precisely as it is, in all its extent, by any one mind. Truth even, held without inquiry, fosters a temper of passive acquiescence, and makes the spirit effeminate. How many illuminations of celestial origin come to all in sincere hours! Are these inspirations to be subjected to the authority of any tribunal? All expression of *will* by bodies and individuals that others should think as they do is tyranny. Numbers have no more right than a single person to enforce doctrine. They are each and all fallible, and are bound to special caution lest they should exert an influence over each other unfriendly to impartiality. A community so bound to an opinion as to abandon a man, and to be unjust to his character, who questions it, is a persecutor, as much as if it used legal penalties. A community should cherish liberality as it does industry, for truth is the food of the soul."

"We should multiply our connections with other minds in order that we may receive and communicate more largely. The liberal mind distinguishes the essential from the accidental, the spirit from the form, rises to general truths and detaches them from particulars, discerns unchangeable goodness amidst all its transient manifestations, separates between the end of human nature and the means of its development, between the temporary arrangement of Providence and its everlasting objects, and judges character, nations, events, opinions, measures, according to these broad views. This is the noblest exercise of thought. Narrow minds take things in mass, confound the local with the universal, the accidental with the essential, and spend their strength in contending for what is secondary, while they alienate themselves from their brethren, with whom they fundamentally agree, on the ground of circumstantial differences. There is a generous way of looking at all subjects, — totally opposed to the technical, the pro-

fessional, the sectional, the sectarian, — a magnanimous style of thought and feeling, by which we cast aside the party connections which warp and straighten us, the bribes and lures of applause and public sentiment, and view all things in their relations to mankind at large, and the movement of God's grand designs."

"My object should be to contribute to that great work which God is promoting in the world. Every faithful effort has its influence. Let me never despair. Local, temporary objects should be comparatively unimportant. An expanded interest in humanity should govern me. I am connected with the Church Universal, with all future ages; and let no devotion to a party lead me for an instant to overlook its defects, or to forget the high claims of truth and right. The religion which is to open heaven in the human heart is as far away from heated bigotry, as from the lowness of a worldly temper. To breathe warmth into the cold, generous piety into the abject and servile, honorable views of God and man into the dejected, timid, and superstitious, should be my end. Let me live to exhibit the paternal character of God, the quickening influence of his spirit, his willingness to raise us to perfection, the glorious capacities and destination of man, the filial nature of religion, the beauty of benevolence, of self-denial and suffering in a generous cause, the union formed by a spirit of humanity between God and the soul, the joy of high moral sentiment, the possibility of attaining to sublime greatness of character and habitual largeness of sentiment and action. Men are to be regenerated not so much by a sense of the blessedness of goodness in the abstract, as by coming to understand that disinterestedness, that union with God and his whole spiritual family, in which goodness consists. The glory and nobleness of a soul self-surrendered to God, joined to him in purposes of beneficence, swallowed up in a pure, overflowing love, must be made manifest."

"It is essential in a minister, that his mind should be habitually under religious influences, so that his whole character and life shall diffuse an animating spiritual power. All should feel that his soul is in communion with God, that he lives under the guidance of His *will*, and by His spiritual influences. He should unite with devotional fervor an harmonious, full development of human nature. His end is to flash upon the dormant minds of men a consciousness of the Divine life, to touch the spring of spiritual affection. He should enable them to see how religion works within his own soul, he should make his own mind visible, and show religious truth, not abstractly, but warm and living, clothed with the light and glow of his own conscious experience. Let the perfection of the Christian life, its high, holy, humane spirit, its communion with God, its elevation, disinterestedness, hope, joy, be my habitual state, so that in all my thoughts, actions, studies, I may be a guide to my people."

"Unity of impression should be an object to a minister. He should not undo one day the work of another. All his instructions should have a common bearing, and this implies enlarged views of religion. He must not waste the zeal of men on points of secondary importance. His efforts should be systematic, not desultory, and be governed, not by sudden impressions, but by extensive plans. His whole life and influence should have one tendency. Nothing demands such lucidness, breadth, depth, completeness, harmony of exposition, as the religious life. Foundations must be planted firmly. Seeds of great, enduring, ever-growing principles must be sown. People are injured and made dull and disproportioned by laying excessive stress upon every point. Preaching should call into action the whole spiritual being of hearers. It should not address one faculty only, but manifest religion to the reason, conscience, imagination, heart. A minister should strive to unfold harmoniously the

souls of his people, just as he sees Providence unfold the body in a plant or animal. His whole inward life should be brought into activity. His preaching and intercourse with men should be the result of a joint and vigorous co-operation of all his spiritual powers, quickened by a Divine influence. To excite to *universal growth* should be his end."

"In proportion to the difficulty of the times should be my desire to exhibit solemn and ennobling views. The long religious torpor which has rested on the world has prepared men for an opposite excess. Religious sensibility is an essential element in man, and, however smothered for a time, it must and will break forth again with power. Is it not the error of those who oppose the prevalent systems of Orthodoxy, that they do not substitute interesting views for those which they would remove? They insist that Christ came to restore human nature, that moral good is his end. But do they present this end in its dignity and grandeur? Must we not strongly conceive and represent the glorious change which he came to bring in men and nations? A *divine life*, a *heavenly life*, this is the end for which he came. In exhibiting religion as this *universal regeneration of all human interests*, the present degradation of society must be exposed. Here is the need of earnest remonstrance. Great explicitness, fearlessness, is demanded. Jesus Christ must be taken as the standard and rule; the highest, purest principles of his religion must be plainly proposed as the guide to individual and social practice. The world waits for a new exhibition of Christianity in all its sublime encouragements, its solemn warnings, its glorious assurances. With what entire devotedness should I consecrate myself to this great end!"

"Let it be my object to conceive and express the gospel *worthily*, in life and word to exhibit the religion of Christ in its purity, its sublimity, its divine beauty. Let it be my

desire to raise men's thoughts to the *great end* of the being and mission of Christ, to show the exalted, perfected, heavenly state of man which he came to introduce, to exhibit the glorious relations into which he desires to bring us. Let it be my aim to raise to this lofty height the moral sensibility, the ambition, the aspirations, the generosity of men, to animate them to see brightly and vividly this grand destiny which opens before them, to carry their thoughts forward to the future greatness of virtuous humanity, to shed the light of heaven on their nature and present state. The end to be set before them is a thirst for nearness to God, love of him, bright views of him, sympathy with him, desire of his friendship, disinterested self-surrender to his designs, heavenly goodness, heavenly joy, conformity to the spirit of his beloved Son, — a perfect oneness, in a word, with the Heavenly Father. May not this exhibition of Christianity, as an all-ennobling system of Divine influences, be the *one great end* to which my life and labors may tend?"

"I have often been inclined to think that my own science, that of ethics and theology, comprehended all others. Something specious, certainly, might be said to show that it is the only true medical science, and that they who operate most successfully on the mind are best entitled to the name of physicians."

"I know not who is now filling my place in my pulpit. How should I rejoice to learn that some one was making deeper impressions there than I have ever made! I am far from looking back with much satisfaction on my labors. I can say with the old Roman, 'Of honor I have had enough'; but how cheerfully would I give up all the pleasures of distinction for the joy of witnessing more of that piety among my people, which gives praise, not to the poor instrument, but to '*Him* of whom are all things'!"

"Let us not linger at the threshold of Christianity; conduct us into its inmost depths of life. Help us to break

through the obstacles, the doubts, despondency, lethargy, weakness, which hinder us. Open in us an unquenchable aspiration for truth and virtue. Give us a spirit of rational, filial, strong, unreserved, triumphant, glad obedience. Give us perfect confidence in Thee, whose laws are the dictates of fatherly wisdom and love, and who dost delight in the purity and glory of thy children. Dispose us to see thy goodness everywhere, not only when descending upon us, but when diffused abroad, so that we may discern the love which pervades the universe and quickens all spirits.

"Make us sensible of our inward wants, indigence, destitution, weakness. Lay open to us our corrupt motives. Expose to us our hidden vices in all their deformity. Teach us to look steadily into ourselves, till we shall see with something of thine own abhorrence every evil affection. Lead us away from false resources to a sure dependence on thy perfect will, and may this reign supreme within us. Help us to look through the disguises of self-love, to judge ourselves truly, to anticipate the revelations of the last day; and let not this knowledge of our deficiencies and deformities fill us with dejection, but rather endear to us thy mercy, and lead us to thy grace, while rousing us to vigilance and to firm and faithful conflict with every irregular desire.

"Dispose us to a sincere sympathy with all men, not only to see extraordinary excellence with joy, but to take pleasure in the humblest improvements of our fellow-creatures, in the beginning of everlasting life within them. Incline us to respect the feelings of others, so that we may never wound, nor tempt, nor depress a human being. May we understand the sublime heights of benevolence to which we are called by the gospel, and aim at perfection in all social relations. Assist us to express with power and unaffected simplicity the beauty of virtue, so that we may attract all around us to the heavenly life. Inspire us with

an active, diffusive beneficence, and may we have the witnesses of our good-will in the improved virtues and happiness of our friends, associates, and all within the sphere of our influence. Affect our hearts with the loveliness, beauty, and joy of that mild, condescending, affectionate spirit which our Master breathed, and may we imbibe it till our lives overflow with usefulness and bounty. Assist us in enlarging our benevolence, in diffusing our affections, so that we may embrace in kind regards all beings capable of happiness; and give us wisdom to design and vigor to execute noble and extensive schemes of public and private good. May we learn to lose ourselves in disinterested services, from generous ardor, and to delight in imitating thee, and in promoting the great ends of thy providence, and the blessedness of creation.

"We pray for the *fulness of thy spirit.* We beseech thee to animate with new life our languid affections. Give us the fervor of devotion, the glow of philanthropy. Awaken us to a holy zeal, a joy in thy service, a promptness to do and to suffer whatever thou dost appoint. May the labors of life become acts of religion and offerings to thee, by the conscientiousness, purity of motive, and devotedness to thy will of perfect good, from which they are performed. May our sense of thy presence be ever more clear, our conceptions of thy character more bright, our gratitude more tender, our love of exalted virtue more generous, our good-will more overflowing. May a Divine life be ever growing within us."

This series of autobiographical papers cannot be more satisfactorily closed than by the following extracts from a discourse in which he thus sums up the results of his ministerial experience.

*May* 26, 1822. "In reviewing the past, I cannot reproach myself with much indolence. The spirit of the

times has compelled me to think anxiously and laboriously on the subject of religion. Holding sentiments which are often decried as perilous, I have felt myself bound to examine them with care. In this respect a conscientious minister's lot is more difficult than formerly. There have been times when one generation received implicitly the faith of the preceding. The ministry then imposed a light task on the intellect. But times are changed, nor can we for a moment complain that heavier work is now exacted; for a chain on the mind is the worst slavery, and the searching for ourselves, and on our own responsibility, into God's truth, however exhausting, is among our most improving labors. And here I am not conscious of remissness. On the contrary, my exertions — though to men of firmer constitution they would have been moderate and light — have to me been often excessive, and have particularly unfitted me for a branch of duty, which, however important, I have thought myself bound to postpone to the former, but which, if strengthened, I hope yet to fulfil. I mean pastoral visiting. . . . . .

"I have had a growing conviction that the ministry is needed in countries where Christianity is established, not so much to communicate *new* truths, as to *quicken* the truths which lie dead in the multitude; and that the qualification of a minister on which usefulness chiefly depends is, that he should speak of religion from deep conviction, with life and power, with affectionate interest, with a soul possessed and kindled by the truth, — that he should inculcate religion, not as a tradition lodged passively in the intellect, but as a reality of which he has the same living persuasion as of the most affecting interests of the present state. When I consider the earnestness and devotion demanded by such a cause as Christianity, I feel most thoroughly my imperfections, and pray God that I may live to preach with a fresh *experience* of its power. . . . . .

"In reviewing my preaching, I cannot hope that I have taught you truth unmixed with error, but I have a calm and cheerful conviction that I have taught the great and essential principles of our religion. I have particularly labored to set before you a just view of God's all-benignant character, as the spring and motive of filial love and affectionate obedience. In regard to Jesus Christ, I have continually labored to impress you with the proofs of his Divine mission, the venerableness and loveliness of his spirit, the excellence of his religion, the benevolent purposes of his life and death, and your personal need of the aids which his gospel of grace and mercy gives. . . . . .

"In regard to the person or rank of Christ, you well know that a controversy has prevailed during my ministry, in which every minister has been compelled to take a part. My views on this subject have varied but little since my first connection with you, and have been made known to you with entire frankness. The great fundamental principle of Christian belief is, that Jesus Christ was anointed, sent, commissioned by God, that he derived all his authority and offices and power from God, so that God who sent him is always to be adored as the first cause, the original, of whatever Christ communicates, and is to be our ultimate hope and confidence. I know nothing which appears to be more plainly a departure from this fundamental principle of Christian belief than the doctrine that Christ is God himself, equally entitled with the Father who sent him to the glory of originating our redemption, equally saving us by his own underived, infinite power. To teach this is to resist the current of Scripture language and Scripture precepts, to withstand Christ's great purpose, which was to glorify his Father, and to shake the fundamental principle of natural as well as revealed religion, the *Unity of God.*

"My ministry on this point I look back upon with unmixed pleasure; nor have I any consciousness of having

thus degraded Jesus Christ. His glory consists in the love with which God regarded him, in the offices with which God has invested him, in the likeness which he bears to God's purity and goodness, — not in being God himself; and they are the last to consult Christ's glory, who, instead of making him the brightest representative and the most exalted minister of his Father, throw a mist and doubtfulness over his whole nature, by making him the same being with his Father. I make these remarks with no disposition to bring reproach on any class of Christians; for I would not breathe a single word which might even seem to be unkind. But the circumstances of my ministry compel me, in reviewing it, to refer to the controversy which has shaken this church, and in which I have been charged with conducting my people into ruinous error. That I have not erred I ought not to affirm with the decision and confidence too common in controversy, and therefore I would only say that I have inquired earnestly, and that inquiry has given me a calm, stable conviction of the great principle that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from God, a derived, dependent being, not the self-existent and infinite Creator.

"Still, I have not been accustomed to preach Christ *as a mere man*. I have spoken of him as a peculiar being. He existed in a state of glory before his birth. Nor was his agency for our salvation confined to his teaching, and example, and suffering, and resurrection, while on the earth; but he is now a glorified, powerful agent in human affairs, our friend, benefactor, intercessor, and strengthener, and hereafter he will be our judge. These views I have urged, not because the mere belief of them is to save, but because they have seemed to me fitted to create a more earnest, affectionate, reverent, and obedient regard to Jesus Christ, — such a regard as will lead us to form ourselves upon the model of his precepts and example. This, this is the *essential point*, and he who is faithful here has a saving faith, be

his views of Jesus whatever they may. The greatest and most dangerous error of the age is the substitution of opinion, speculation, controversy, of noise and bustle about religion, for the *practice* of Christ's precepts, especially of those precepts which peculiarly characterize his religion, — filial love towards God, and self-denying, all-forgiving, disinterested, mild, humble, patient charity towards men. This *love*, this charity, — which is *the end* of the Christian commandment, which is greater than faith and hope, which is the very spirit of Christ, which is *God dwelling in us*, — I have made supreme in my ministry; and I trust that I have not labored wholly in vain. . . . . .

"What I deplore in the state of this society and of the community is a languid, depressed tone of religious feeling, and the want of decision, energy, strong purpose, in applying Christianity to conduct. Religion slumbers under the embers, when it should be a quickening flame. It is my consolation, that on this topic I have preached plainly, faithfully, and not without earnestness, admonishing you of the perils of a state of society like ours, where a partial Christianity is enjoined by public sentiment and habit, and of course is easily adopted, whilst the *spirit* of Christianity is sadly wanting."

It will be readily understood that in the private papers, from which the foregoing extracts have been made, are many passages of deeper interest than any which we have felt at liberty to publish; and it is chiefly the number, variety, minuteness, long continuance of his observations upon his duty and his own character, which reveal Mr. Channing's conscientiousness. But probably even these specimens will serve to show with what wakeful hospitality he greeted each new suggestion that came like a stranger to his tent-door, and how he made

them his familiar guests, conversed with them, listened humbly to their message, and found by glad experience that he had thus entertained angels unawares. More and more the sublime opportunities of the age were opening upon him, and he gave himself with ever fresher zeal to the work of advancing what he saw to be a new era of humanity.

His usefulness among his own people and in his immediate community, as well as his wide celebrity, suggested at this time to a small company of Unitarians in New York the thought of inviting Mr. Channing to remove to that city. On his return from Baltimore, in 1819, he had preached to them, and communicated an impulse which had continued to grow, and now having formed themselves into the "First Congregational Society of the City of New York," they wrote to him in 1820, saying, — "We are convinced that your aid is indispensably necessary to the rapid and permanent success of the cause of uncorrupted Christianity in this quarter of the Union," and urging him, if possible, to enter upon this new field of labor. "The church which you have so essentially contributed to found," they conclude, "would be immediately built up, and we confidently anticipate that other societies would be formed, united in the same faith and hope." In a letter to a friend who had consulted him in relation to this project, he uses this language: — "Were I a young man, and unfettered by any engagements, I should prefer the situation you propose to any other within my hopes." But to the committee he made the following reply: —

"I cannot for a moment hesitate as to the answer which I should give to your application. I regard the situation to

which you invite me as honorable and important. But Providence has appointed me another lot. Public, domestic, and private considerations, which I need not enlarge upon, leave me no liberty of forsaking the post which I now occupy. Its duties and responsibilities are, indeed, above my strength, and I believe that no selfish regards attach me to it. But I think that I distinctly read in a variety of circumstances the will of God that I should continue here; and unless these change in a very unexpected manner, I shall remain whilst I have strength to labor."

Most fortunate was it for himself and for others, that he felt himself thus bound by duty to the city which had adopted him among her most honored sons. For no sphere in the country could for a moment compare with Boston in its fitness to call out all the best powers of head and heart in a man so constituted. Its unity of character, high moral and intellectual activity, benevolent earnestness, social compactness, as well as its religious, literary, and philanthropic institutions, formed an atmosphere sufficiently stimulating, without dissipating his attention and wasting his energy, while he was too free and self-relying to be fettered by its subservience to leaders and *cliques*, its sudden fevers and chills of popularity, its fondness for conventional proprieties. The public considerations to which he refers in the foregoing letter, as forbidding him to leave his post, are sufficiently obvious. One of the "private" ones undoubtedly was, that he knew his own peculiarities thoroughly, and was more fully aware than any one else could be of his unfitness at once from native dispositions and from confirmed habits to be a polemic or a proselyter. A situation like that to which he was invited in New York would have demanded continual efforts of mind in a

controversial direction, and required a zeal for Unitarian*ism* quite foreign to his unsectarian feelings. But his "domestic" ties also detained him in Boston, and to a notice of these we now pass.

When we last saw Mr. Channing in his home, the bright ring of brothers and sisters, clasped by a mother's love, was unbroken; and we purposely left untouched that image of the happy family of which his own pure, gentle, heavenly affection was the guardian angel. But long before the period at which our narrative has now arrived, link after link had been removed by the various chances and changes of life, — by marriage, death, and inevitable dispersion. The oldest son, Francis, had early married, as we have already seen; and the eldest daughter, whose gentle heart was from girlhood interlinked in destinies with Washington Allston, had been united to him on his return to America after his studies in Italy, and had gone to England to share the uncertain fortunes of an artist and a man of genius; the third sister had also removed with her husband to New York. Of the four younger brothers, two had entered into the learned professions, two into mercantile pursuits; and thus the once large household had dwindled away. In relation to his sister Ann's marriage, he had thus written to his grandfather Ellery: —

"A few hours ago, Washington and Ann, after their long and patient courtship, were united in marriage. We consider this a happy event; but Ann is too important a member of our family to be resigned without something like sorrow. The ceremony made us rather solemn. I do not wonder at this effect. The obligations of the marriage covenant are so extensive, and the consequences of the

union so vast and uncertain, that I should pronounce a person thoughtless in the extreme, who should exhibit no seriousness on such an occasion.

"Your granddaughter has found, I believe, an excellent husband, one who from principle and affection will make her happiness his constant object. I hope that she will settle at no great distance from us; but we have not yet sufficient taste for the arts to give Mr. Allston the encouragement he deserves. We have, indeed, money enough to spend on cumbrous furniture, which another generation will throw into the garret as antiquated and absurd, but we cannot afford to adorn our walls with the productions of genius, which delineate the unchanging beauties of nature or the grandeur of man, and to which the lapse of time will impart only new value."

But sadder separations followed. In the summer of 1810, Francis, from the effects of fatigue while engaged in the laborious discharge of his duties as a lawyer, was seized with violent hemorrhage, and sank rapidly into a decline. He retired to Newport, where he lingered for a time amid the beautiful scenery of his native island, receiving every kindness which the assiduous care of anxious friends could lavish, and in the autumn sailed with his wife and a favorite cousin for Rio Janeiro, with the hope of finding benefit in a change of climate. But his strength had been too much exhausted, and on the nineteenth day of the voyage he died. Months passed over, and the spring had opened, before the intelligence reached Boston. It was on a Sunday, between the morning and the afternoon services, that a friend called to bear the tidings to those in whose hearts hope and anxiety had so long alternated. Mr. Channing was alone as he entered, and instantly read in

his countenance a confirmation of their worst forebodings. He silently pressed his hand, requested him to mention it to no one else, and then retired to his study to gain in prayer the calmness which he felt he needed, before he could tell his mother that her first-born had first entered into the spiritual world. But when at last he summoned the family, his own face was as serene as if he had been a messenger of joy. The next week was one of profoundest mourning, not merely because death had for the first time, after so long a period, entered their circle, nor merely because he who was taken had been a second father, but because they had parted from one who had made life rich by sweetness, affection, cheerful wisdom, incorruptible honor, high hope, and confiding piety. To William this bereavement caused a grief as deep and poignant as a disciplined spirit devoted to ends of universal good could feel, for Francis was his bosom friend. But on the Sunday following he preached two appropriate discourses, in which, while not attempting to hide the sense of his own loss, he showed his people that an ascended angel had opened to him bright glimpses of heaven. A few broken sentences, given as they stand in his journals, will best show his state of feeling.

"A brother, — a friend, — a nurse in sickness, — a counsellor. One who so often and so tenderly thought of me, — of us all, — who was a guardian of our happiness. One who grew up with me. One who has engaged so many of my thoughts and feelings. The first-born, — the stay of his family. . . . . .

"The first of our number taken from a circle which before was complete, — how grateful should we be that so many of us have been so long spared to each other, so large a family and so few breaches! — taken from the midst *of us, never* again to be seen and embraced on earth. . . . .

"God has made a melancholy breach in our number. May we feel that this is only the beginning of bereavement. Let us love each other more, and live prepared to resign each other. Let this separation be to survivors a bond of tender union. . . . . .

"Taken at a distance from us, beyond the reach of our kind offices. His remains committed to the deep, never to be collected by us. . . . . .

"Taken in the midst of life, — a son, — a husband, — a father. In the full vigor of his powers, when most able to bless and to do good. . . . . .

"Let me prize more highly the character of my friends, be sensible to their excellences, be grateful to them, and labor to improve them. Let me with frankness and mildness reprove their faults and errors. Let me consider the excellence for which they were made, and be animated from God's love to seek their welfare. Have I done them justice? The duties of my dear brother have now devolved wholly upon me. Let this awaken me to all my social relations. . . . . .

"'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart.' Do I understand this? Let affliction lead me to this divine intercourse, to this fixed thought upon God. He has taken away one object of hope and love, and thus taught us our dependence. Let us look to Him, live upon Him, live for Him. He is our Father and loves us. It is to refine us, to bring us together again in happier circumstances, that he thus afflicts us. Let every feeling like selfishness be extinguished. This separates me from God. . . . . .

"God has wide connections in this affliction. He made our friend not for us only, but for the creation, — for himself. His infinite purposes deserve our disinterested reverence. Let us submit. We are not overlooked. God loves us. We must not imagine that God thinks only of us or our family. We must view him in his relations to the infinity

of beings. There are infinite beings, dearer and purer, who deserve far more of his regards. He seeks the universal interests of all his creatures. Abba! Father! how slowly, how faintly, do we realize this relation! How happy should we be that *His will* is done! It is our privilege to acquiesce. . . . . .

"This dear sister, these dear children, are left to us as a legacy, — and our kindness and care for them must never be remitted. How do they call for all our attachment! These children require from me more than affection, — much watchfulness, forethought, study of their characters and propensities; — I must help to form them. What a new motive for self-improvement, disinterestedness, clearness of mind, temperance!"

The last of these extracts indicates the generous feelings of their writer, but only they who experienced the faithfulness with which, through every after year, he fulfilled the trust which he thus acknowledged, can appreciate the depth and delicacy of his affection. Thenceforth he was a father to his brother's orphans, an ever-wise and ready counsellor to their widowed mother. Immediately after his sister's return from South America, he took her and her children home to live with his mother at the parsonage, and a few lines, written by her at that time to a friend, will show more brightly than any second-hand picture could how he then appeared in his family.

"While I am cheered and consoled by William's presence and conversation, I can bear every thing cheerfully. It would be impossible to give you a full impression of the happy influence which he exerts. At his approach, all trials and perplexities disappear, every feeling but that of kindness vanishes, nothing is seen but smiles, nothing heard

but conciliating and loving words. We not only seem, but feel, as human beings should; and I verily believe, that, if I was always in his presence, I should never say or do or think any thing inconsistent with the purest principles of Christianity. He is constantly occupied; but his few leisure moments are devoted to us, and you would be pleased to see how the children love him. They are fond of all their uncles, but William is the decided favorite. They run to him the moment he opens the door, and he can seldom get away except by stealth. Their highest reward for good conduct is a visit to his study, and their greatest punishment the denial of a game of romps or of a story from Uncle William."

It was in relation to these children that the following letter was written to their mother: —

"My observation of children has not led me to adopt that severe theology which ranks them among demons, but I am as little disposed to join with writers of fiction and exalt them to the rank of angels. These little cherubs do not always show us in their beaming countenances the serenity of heaven, and some of their sounds would hardly accord with the music of that harmonious region. They have capacities of improvement, but capacities which are not to be filled in a moment. The soil is productive, but it bears weeds as well as useful plants, and needs patient and skilful cultivation. I look on a blooming, smiling child as I do on the earth in spring, when covered with verdure and flowers. I am delighted, and almost forget the uncertainties of the future in the beauty and joy of the present moment. But I soon recollect that the blossom is not the fruit, that there is nothing permanent in this gay scenery, that the harvest is at a distance, that the valuable qualities of the mind and heart ripen slowly, almost insensibly, that they are exposed to a thousand adverse influences, that they must be

guarded and cherished with a tender care, and that, after all, we may reap but sparingly where we have sown with a liberal hand. I do not mean that I consider education as ineffectual; but I believe it to be the part of wisdom not to form large expectations, — especially not to anticipate or desire very sudden improvement. Rapid growth does not characterize the most valuable productions of the natural or intellectual world."

But another of the family was now to be summoned to join Francis in the "Father's house." Under date of May 6th, 1815, are entered in Mr. Channing's journal the following brief fragments, which record his high sense of his sister's character, and his warm affection for one who until her marriage had been his confidante.

"Yesterday brought us the sad tidings of Ann's death. She is gone, — that beloved and excellent sister, — removed after so long an absence. We were not permitted to minister to her last sufferings. The hands of strangers closed her eyes, — a foreign land holds her remains." [She had died in London, Feb. 2, 1815.]

"How tender she was! — how unwearied her kindness! As a child, how faithful! As a wife, how constant! In friendship how unalterable! . . . . .

"Can I ever forget the offices of a nurse which she proffered with so much affection in my last sickness? Can I ever forget her, the last by my bed-side at night, the first in the morning, giving me her strength, watching over me as a parent? . . . . .

"She lived to be useful. At home she toiled without weariness, and sacrificed herself without a complaint. . . . . .

"How silent, unostentatious, were her virtues! As a Christian, her principles were strong, her sense of duty deep, her heart humble, her professions sincere. She *seemed* to have acquired in early life the consideration of

mature years. Cheerful and animated, she was still governed by the most delicate sense of propriety. How beloved she was by all who knew her! — she could not have had an enemy. Home was her sphere, her happiness. Bound to it by strong affection, she sighed for no pleasures beyond it. She was a stranger to the world. . . . . .

" Her character particularly inspired confidence. Her heart spoke in her actions. . . . . .

" Her singular disinterestedness ! In her sufferings abroad, what cheerfulness did her letters express ! She was too kind to draw on our sympathy. God gave her many blessings ; and now he has taken her to himself. . . . . .

" How she comes to me in her affectionateness ! How kind she was to all around her ! How silent were her careful assiduities ! Under her calm exterior what deep, strong love ! How did she bless us, even when least happy herself ! . . . . .

" God multiplies bereavements. Our family is falling to pieces. Is there no bond of union ? Are we to be lost to each other ? Let not dear Ann depart, without bearing me with her into futurity. Let us think only of following our friends. Let them lead us to heaven. Let the dead be in our hearts. Let us think and talk more as immortals. . . . . .

" She is gone, not lost. Let me rejoice in her joy. Is she not mindful of us ? Did God form such ties that they might be broken ? She may be near me. Let her witness in me only sincere affection and piety. . . . . .

" My mother is more than ever to be my care. I am now her oldest child ; she leans on me. . . . . .

" Let her humility and disinterestedness be my pattern. Let me live to be more useful to my family, friends, people. Let my heart be the seat of every humane and devout affection. Let me be always employed in doing good to others, in denying myself, in rendering offices of kindness, especially of spiritual kindness."

The following extract from a letter to a friend will serve yet further to show how deep and tender was his affection for this most gentle and loving woman.

"*Boston*, May 9, 1815. You can easily conceive the feelings which this intelligence has awakened. Ann was no common friend. Her heart, which was, perhaps, the most constant in its affections that I have ever known, clung to her family with peculiar tenderness. The circumstances of her early life, particularly her attachment to Mr. Allston, separated her from the world, and seemed to extinguish all relish for its ordinary pleasures; and her whole life was given to her family. In her domestic relations I have hardly known one so faithful; and the impression she has left on our hearts is one which time will never obliterate. One of her last acts, before leaving this country, was to unite herself to our church, an act which nothing but the diffidence and humility of her character had led her to defer so long. Since leaving us we have not been able to observe her course, but the singular consistency and uniformity of her character is a pledge that she was found walking humbly in the path of her duty, and that her end was peace.

"I find that events of this kind disturb my mind much less than formerly. My increasing conviction of the *perfect* goodness of God, of his *paternal* character, of his minute and tender care, and of the riches of his *mercy* in Jesus Christ, the last truth in religion which men truly believe and feel, enables me more cheerfully to resign all things to his disposal. The thought, that God has made our souls immortal, with capacities of angelic purity and glory, and for the very end that we should ascend to heaven, to the society of angels, to moral perfection, to the most intimate union with Himself and his Son,— this thought, when it is felt by us, gives a new aspect to nature, to society, to all our present relations and connections. I have found myself of late

inclined to regard the future state of the blessed in a more affecting and I think attractive light than formerly, as a state of mutual dependence, of useful services, of the tenderest affections. Our friends, in leaving the body, do not put off humanity, they do not lose their affection for those they leave behind; and I would ask, Do they lose their concern, their pity? Are those sympathies which are so virtuous in our friends on earth, which Jesus felt, unworthy of heaven? An unfeeling heaven, a heaven where the good forget their friends, or are forbidden to feel deeply for them, is certainly not very interesting. Have you never felt, in listening to some descriptions of heaven, that they wanted sensibility? Can we bear that this bond of union between us sufferers on earth and the good in heaven should be dissolved?"

But this faithful son and brother was now himself to leave the roof which his own generous devotedness had made his mother's. In the summer of 1814, he had married his cousin Ruth Gibbs, and after passing the winter in the parsonage, he was by the earnest request of Mrs. Gibbs to become for a time a member of her family. Here opened upon him a life most rich in gentle happiness and beautiful affection. His mother-in-law, who was the sister of his father, had much of the character of her brother, and nothing could have been more benignant than her whole aspect and manner. Diffidence blended with dignity surrounded her with an atmosphere of sweet refinement, and, self-forgetful as a child, she found her joy in making all about her bright and content. The ample means which her husband had left enabled her also to gratify every hospitable impulse and elegant taste. In relation to his marriage, one of Mr. Channing's sisters thus writes: —

"You need not that I should tell you of the respect and tenderness which he always felt for woman; but you, perhaps, are not aware, that, with all his admiration of the gentler sex, he lived to the age of thirty-four or five, ignorant of the warmest affection of the heart. He had a great respect for woman's rights; and one of my last conversations with him was on the necessity of a law to secure to a married woman her property, the interest of which he thought should be always paid to her, without her husband's having any claim to control her in its expenditure."

It may be said, in a word, that the principle here expressed was the one by which Mr. Channing governed himself, with the most scrupulous delicacy and fastidious honor, throughout his married life.

We must leave the reader to infer from the ever-widening cheerfulness of his later years the fitness of this union. Inwardly and outwardly his lot henceforth was singularly serene. From about this time commenced, too, his summer visits to Rhode Island, where Mrs. Gibbs, who resided in Boston during the winter, retained a country-seat; and how much the few months annually passed amid the quiet charms of "Oakland" attuned and harmonized his spirit will hereafter abundantly appear.

In this connection it may be agreeable to those who desire to form a full acquaintance with Mr. Channing, to learn his views of the marriage relation. They are thus presented in a sermon to his people in 1816.

"In this country, perhaps, the state of woman, the modes

of life, and the moral sentiments which pervade the community, are more favorable to conjugal and domestic happiness than in any other part of the world. The culture which is bestowed on the female mind, and which distinguishes modern times from the most refined periods of antiquity, — the respect which is accorded to woman, and which Christianity has done so much to inspire, — the reverence which prevails for the marriage vow, and the indignation which falls on conjugal infidelity, — the habit by which we are marked, of looking to our homes for the greatest part of our happiness, and the mixture of freedom and delicacy with which our general intercourse is conducted, — all contribute to elevate among us the female character, to render woman the associate of man's most refined pleasures and pursuits, and to confer on the conjugal connection a tenderness and dignity which have rarely distinguished it.

"Women! in proportion as you contemplate the condition of your sex in other countries and other ages, whether in the rude scenes of savage life, or in the confinements of eastern voluptuousness, whether in the ages of Grecian and Roman splendor, when female culture extended but little beyond the distaff or the loom, or even in the highest ranks of life on the other side of the Atlantic, — I am persuaded that you will find reason to bless that Providence which has appointed you this goodly heritage; and I would call upon you to express your gratitude to God, and to vindicate the female character. . . . . .

"The indissolubleness of marriage should be distinctly and seriously weighed by those who have to form this connection. Let not the most solemn engagement of life be an act of rashness and unreflecting passion. Let the heart take counsel of the understanding. Let the future as well as the present be brought into the account. Let not the eye or the imagination be trusted. Let the young man or the young woman inquire, Is this a friend with whom I would

wish to spend, not only my youth, but my age, not only my health, but my sickness, on whom I can lean in my griefs, to whom I can confide my trials, to whom I am willing to resign my character, — who, if reverses should befall me, would help me to sustain hardship and distress, who will reciprocate my best feelings, who will walk with me to heaven? . . . . .

"The different qualities by which man and woman are distinguished and contrasted prepare them for a peculiarly tender and beneficial union, — prepare them to supply each other's deficiencies, to perfect each other's character, and to bear distinct, yet equally necessary, parts in that most important work of the present state, the support and rearing of a family. Marriage, then, ought to be regarded as instituted for a very noble end, to awaken the heart, to exercise and strengthen its sensibilities and charities, to train it to the perfection of social virtue, to confer the highest enjoyments of friendship, to secure to each party the benefit of the other's strength, intelligence, and virtues, and to unite both in forming useful and virtuous members for the community.

"Were our views of the connection thus elevated, did we always regard it as the great refiner of the heart, with what new cheerfulness would its duties be performed, its sacrifices be endured! Marriage is not viewed as it should be; the dignity of its end is overlooked. Too many rush into it without understanding its proper happiness and design, and of course without weighing its obligations. Can we wonder that its duties are so often neglected? . . . . .

"There should be an habitual flow of minute and kind attentions. There are a thousand nameless, indescribable offices by which the heart expresses its interest, and which serve as a continual nourishment to the affections. There is danger that the familiarity of constant intercourse may produce a negligence of manners, a want of mutual respect, a carelessness as to pleasing. It is not, I fear, uncommon

to see the fervor of youthful affection cooling into indifference. There may be no positive unkindness; there may be enough of decorum; but there is nothing of that love which overflows in minute and ceaseless kindness. Every day brings with it opportunities of mutual services, which to a stranger may seem unimportant, but which have their value when prompted by the heart. Accustom yourselves to multiply expressions of affection; aim to give pleasure; abstain from what will give pain; make little sacrifices. The atmosphere which feeds the flame is an invisible and silent agent, and in this respect it is an emblem of the minute and gentle offices by which conjugal affection is sustained.

"Another duty belonging to husbands and wives, included in what I have just stated, is this, — they should cultivate each other's society. They should avoid long and unnecessary separations, for these generate unconcern and produce an independence on each other which marks a declining attachment. As far as is consistent with their duties, they should include each other in all their plans. They should, in particular, share the same pleasures. There should be few solitary joys. The more of common objects, of common tastes, of common resources they possess, the tender and more beneficial will be their union. They should often read together the same books, view together the same scenes of nature, enjoy the same society. It is a bad symptom, when these nearest friends seem weary of each other's society, when their plans of life seem to have few points of contact, when their happiness is derived from different springs. . . . . .

"Let me mention one more duty belonging to husbands and wives. They should labor to improve each other's characters. This is the noblest purpose and use of the connection. They who sustain this near relation, and have consequently great power over each other's minds, should

regard one another in the light which the gospel throws on our nature as immortal beings, capable of great improvement, and whose highest interests are in a future state. Whilst mindful of each other's present happiness, their great solicitude should be that eternity should be secured. Let them watch over each other's hearts and minds with affectionate concern, mutually inviting honest and friendly admonition, and aiding and strengthening religious and benevolent sentiments. . . . . .

"This is the noblest use of the conjugal relation; and when marriage is thus employed, when it becomes a refiner of our nature, uniting the mind with God, and elevating it to heaven, — when they who sustain it prove to each other sources and cherishers of virtuous sentiment, and see in their present union a preparation for indissoluble friendship after death, — when marriage assumes this high and holy character, it is a felicity almost too pure for earth, it is a foretaste of the attachments of a better world."

In Mr. Channing's journals, under date of October, 1816, is found the following affecting passage, in relation to his first-born child. Its simple story needs no word of explanation.

"I remembered the love of Jesus to little children. I remembered the kindness of Him who has called himself our Father, and whose love must be infinitely purer than mine. Still my heart clung to her; and when I saw the last struggle on Wednesday afternoon, about twenty-four hours after her birth, I wept over her as if I had been deprived of a long-possessed blessing. After death her countenance became composed, and to me seemed the most beautiful, soft, gentle, and expressive, which I had ever seen at so early an age. Thursday afternoon I carried her to the tomb, in the full and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. I feel as if my prayers for this little one, and my baptismal and funeral

services, had formed a connection between us. I feel as if I had a child in a happier world, who will know her past history, who will know how earnest were my wishes to bless her, to guide her to all virtue and felicity; and I hope yet to meet her, and to know that my prayers were not in vain, and to see that my child is more excellent, more happy, than I could have rendered her."

But in 1818 he had the privilege of writing to his sister in a happier strain, on the occasion of the birth of a daughter.

"Had I not learned so many lessons of this world's mutableness, I might be in danger of dreaming of a perfect joy on earth. But I do not forget where I am. I hope to remember why I am placed here, and to consider my new relation chiefly as an enlargement of my means of usefulness, and as giving me an object for the heart and for Christian care and exertion. I have not, as you may readily suppose, thought much about *education* as yet! I have a general persuasion, however, that children are educated chiefly by example, by a continual, insensible influence of those around them, and that the surest way to improve our children is to improve ourselves. I do not mean that this motive is as powerful as it should be. I hope, however, that we shall in some degree be governed by it, and shall labor to express no feeling or principle before our little girl which we should not wish her to adopt."

A few extracts from his papers will show the feelings with which he welcomed the young being intrusted to his care.

"What dignity Christianity sheds round the event of birth! How unimportant are the rise and fall of empires, in comparison with the entrance of an immortal soul into existence! Here is a new *agent* introduced into the uni-

verse, — a being now so frail, yet to grow to vast, to inconceivable influence, — a being now so dependent, yet to sustain immense, all-important relations. This child is to survive the changes of nature! We think only of the present. God has formed it for high and unknown purposes. . . . . .

"May this child never have cause to reproach us for evil example, neglect, ruinous indulgence. Through its whole everlasting being, may it remember us, as, under God, its earliest, best friends, by whose kind care it learned to form itself upon the principles which are the foundation of eternal peace. Here is a mind to labor for, which is to live for ever. Our influence on it is to be perpetual. What a claim this little being brings with it! What latent capacities! — yet not one developed. Here is a being whom I may taint or raise to immortal glory. Is this child given to us to become ours? What a possession, to keep the heart alive, not for a day or year, but for life, for ages upon ages!"

And to his people, on the Sunday following, he said: —

"We have heard of a barbarous nation where the child was received with weeping. But this is not nature. There is instinctive, irresistible joy, when we look on the little being brought into a new world, with a form so perfect, a structure so delicate, a countenance so winning, — who comes a stranger to all our solicitudes, who sinks so securely into slumber, as if it were lodged in paradise, who has no resource in its own power for all the wants to which it is exposed, but finds supply beyond its needs in the affection that welcomes it. . . . . .

"We were made to love. This is the end of God in all social relations. It is his purpose that no man should live for himself. He has made life to be a succession of labors and sacrifices for the happiness of others. It is for this that children are made so helpless. They are born weak, that

they should rest upon our strength. Their limbs cannot sustain their weight, that they may be folded in our arms and warmed upon our breasts. It is for this that God gives them such sweetness, innocence, beauty. His purpose is to enlarge our hearts by generous toils and self-denials. The hardest heart melts at the sight of infancy. In every home, however rude, however splendid, one being is embraced with sincere love, and that is the new-born child. The young woman of fashion, whose affections have been dissipated by false pleasures, becomes another person as she clasps her infant in her arms. New tenderness fills her bosom, new solicitudes and hopes spring up. She learns to live in the happiness of this little dependent creature. And in the house of the poor laborer, what overflowing tenderness is poured out to welcome, what toils are cheerfully borne to rear, the child whose birth imposes a perpetual burden! Children call forth a tenderness which softens the whole character in all relations. We enter a warmer region, when we approach a home gladdened by their artlessness, simplicity, confiding affection, playful gladness. The heart awakes to healthier action, and becomes more susceptible to all good impressions. Home is the nursery of the heart; children are really our teachers, and the lessons which they communicate are love, self-forgetfulness, interest in the welfare of others. I am persuaded that just in proportion as the domestic affections have opportunity to expand in any community, is general kindness, sympathy, philanthropy diffused. . . . . .

"A Christian parent, on the birth of a child, has sentiments like these brought with power to his mind: — 'Here is a being committed to me worth more than the world. I am now honored with an infinite trust. This cradle contains a *life*, the issues of which are shrouded in the solemn uncertainties of the everlasting future. Here is not only a helpless being to be loved, but a growing being to be

trained. It is to be influenced in its growth by every one around it. It is to learn the language which falls upon its ear, to catch the manners which pass before its eye, to receive impressions so easily made and so indelible that they will seem like nature. It is to reflect not only the countenances, but the characters, of those who have given it existence. It is a creature of sympathy and imitation, which will receive traces never to be erased. What a trust! God's noblest work is put into my hands. I may do much to inscribe God's image on this immortal mind. I may do much to form a friend for society, a source of good for mankind. I may do much to give a new inhabitant to heaven, a new member to the companies of the blessed. Thanks to thee, O God, for the relation I sustain! By thy grace I will fulfil its duties.' . . . . .

"It is, indeed, a most merciful appointment of God, that children, by needing so much care, impose such responsibility. Many, many parents would have wasted life, neglected and destroyed themselves, had not the parental relation awakened them to reflection. The solemn thought, that the immortal mind intrusted to them might perish through their neglect, has called multitudes home to their own hearts and to God. They have been brought to feel the importance of their own future interests, in thinking of those of their children. The consideration, that their own characters would be communicated to those whom they loved more than themselves, that their children would receive from them principles, habits, and feelings, has induced a watchfulness, a regularity of speech and conduct, and an application to duty, by which their own souls have been purified. Perhaps we little suspect how much of the virtue of a community is to be traced to the strong feeling of responsibility which is awakened in the mind by the parental relation. I repeat it, children are inestimable blessings, by calling forth the consciences of their parents. The instructions we im*part come* back upon ourselves. . . . . .

"Let me add one more thought, most familiar, yet most affecting. In a child we gain a being who can return as well as receive kindness. The love of a good child, — does earth hold as rich a blessing? Its smiles and cheerful obedience repay our toils during its youth; and who can express the value of its affectionate attentions as we advance into age? Who can smooth the pillow of sickness like the hand of the daughter whose sensibility we nurtured in her tender years? Who can sustain our infirm steps like the son whose manly virtues we helped to form? Who would not have his eyes closed, his remains committed to the dust, by filial affection? A good child is a blessing through life, and a blessing after death. I cannot think that in another world we shall forget the kindness which guided and watched over us in this. If any earthly sentiment survive beyond the grave, surely it will be the gratitude of the child and the joy of the parent, when they meet in heaven."

On the occasion of the baptism of one his children, Mr. Channing thus expressed his views of that rite, which some of the readers of this biography may be glad to know.

"The question is asked, 'Why apply a religious institution to a child before he can comprehend or desire its benefits?' Such a question overlooks the great fact of man's existence, that we are born into various human relations, that by birth we enter into a society, into a religious community, as well as into a family. It is in vain to say that children should be left to choose a form of religion for themselves. They cannot escape the influence of family, of country. If Christian principles do not restrain and elevate them, other principles will usurp control over their susceptible years. Such is man's nature and condition. From these considerations it follows, that Christianity must stoop

to the cradle, and take the infant into its arms from the hour of birth. It must make the first claim to children, and set its seal upon them from their earliest breath. It is wise and fit that by some visible sign our religion should lay its hand of benediction upon the young beings who are to be trained by its discipline. The child is, indeed, unconscious of the meaning of our act in baptism; but at that moment it is an intelligent and immortal being, having within itself the seeds of affections and capacities which are to unfold for ever. It soon is to become conscious of that filial feeling which is the simplest element of piety. And how expressive is the rite by which it is given up to Jesus Christ to receive the influences of his religion! . . . . .

"These remarks help us to answer the question most satisfactorily as to the use of baptism to a child. To answer this question, some Christians have thought it necessary to say that baptism communicates to the infant Divine grace, that it is a regenerating ordinance, that when the water touches the body, God's spirit touches the mind, and that a new nature is thereby implanted. This doctrine will hardly maintain its ground in the school of sound theology. Our whole experience opposes it. This institution is useful to children, by exhibiting their claims to Christ's religion, and the design of this religion to operate on their minds. By baptism the light and privileges of the gospel are pledged to them by their parents. By it they are introduced into the Christian community. The water of baptism is a mark of the finger of God upon their foreheads, for ever showing forth the great ends for which a human life is given. . . . . .

"This institution is designed to bring strongly to the hearts of parents a consciousness of their influence over their children, and to bind them solemnly to a just use of this influence. Parents are swayed by the ideas which they habitually associate with their children. It is important, therefore, that they should take high and generous views of

their destiny. But the very helplessness and ignorance of children tempt us to forget the greatness of their nature; and their animal wants while young, and their worldly interests as they advance, continually incline us to consider their earthly good as of primary concern. Now the Christian religion teaches us to treat the infant with *reverence*, to welcome it as the heir of unknown worlds, to see in its early intelligence the dawning of a light which is never to be quenched, but to brighten forever. To beget in us this noble way of thinking and feeling, is it not right that by some positive, definite act, by a public religious form, parents should solemnly consecrate their children to God and Christ, should recognize them as spiritual beings, should set them apart in the eyes of all men for a holy training and an immortal destiny? "

Two sons were in a few years also born to Mr. Channing; and, settled in a delightful home in the vicinity of his mother and of his wife's family, surrounded by a society which listened to his every word with interest and lent a ready aid to all his plans, esteemed and loved by the whole community in which he lived, and every year becoming more widely influential, he felt, as he said to a friend, that "his condition was as prosperous as he could well bear; and that, were it not for almost daily debility and suffering, he should fail of the discipline of pain which every being needs to purify away his self-love." In reference to his constant and increasing infirmity, he writes thus in his journals: —

"Let me gratefully accept the affliction of sickness, and chiefly desire that God's ends shall be answered. Let not one sinking, repining thought come over me."

"Sickness has temptations. Let me not pamper self, but

with distinct purpose employ all means to health, as fitting me for usefulness and for the service of God and man."

So enfeebled had he become in the winter and spring of 1822, that it was determined, at length, that he should try the effect of a voyage and a year's journey abroad. In consequence of this necessity, the Society in Federal Street, with the alacrity which they had always shown to promote his comfort, passed at a full meeting the following votes : —

"1. That the Standing Committee be authorized to engage some person, with the concurrence of the Rev. Dr. Channing, to supply his pulpit for one year.

"2. That the Rev. Dr. Channing be released from all services for his parish for one year, and that Deacon Davis be requested to express to him the earnest wish of this meeting to do all in their power to conduce to the restoration of his health.

"3. That the Standing Committee be authorized to raise by subscription the sum of one thousand dollars to defray the additional expense of the year.

"D. D. ROGERS, *Chairman.*
"BENJ. GUILD, *Clerk.*"

On May 26, the Sunday before he sailed, he thus communicated to his people his reasons for going abroad : —

"The circumstances which have led me to resolve on a voyage are known to all ; and I am greatly encouraged by the unanimity with which my purpose has been seconded by my society. I have formed it reluctantly, after many solicitations and admonitions from judicious friends, and after a faithful trial of the means of health at home. From the moment of my decision, I have, indeed, labored to set

before my mind the pleasures and benefits of visiting the Old World, of traversing countries which have kindled my imagination almost from infancy, whose literature has been the food of my mind, and where nature and society present aspects hardly to be conceived amidst the freshness of our own institutions. But these considerations, while they fortify my purpose, had no influence in originating it. I do not mean to imply that such motives are criminal; yet to one sustaining the relations which I do, home is the field of duty, and to me it has been so happy that my mind until lately shrunk from the thought of quitting it.

"The circumstance which has decided me to leave you is the apprehension which experience has almost made a certainty, that, if I remain, I shall linger through life in a condition unfavorable to my own improvement and to public usefulness, in that middle state between sickness and health, that alternation of animation and languor, that liability to sink under any considerable exertion, which I have experienced to a great degree ever since my connection with you, and which my late indisposition has sensibly increased. More than a year has now elapsed since the interruption of my professional labors, and when I look back on this period, my spirit droops at the thought of continuing to drag on existence inactively and unprofitably, nursing a frail body, seeking relaxation as a task, now gaining and now relapsing, and not only put to silence on Sundays, but compelled through the week to forego the books and means of improvement which from early years have been to me as daily bread. The reflections, which, in these circumstances are apt to fasten on a minister's mind, are such as others cannot easily understand. Conscious of past deficiencies, he is solicitous to repair them, whilst, for aught he knows, the Lord of the vineyard may have already dismissed him as an unprofitable laborer. I mean not to speak of the past year as of one of great suffering, but in the inactivi-

ty to which I have been reduced, an effort has been often needed to sustain my spirits, and my feelings as well as my sense of duty strongly urge me to make a decided effort for health. If I fail, I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I have declined no labor for recovering the capacity of serving God and my fellow-men."

## CHAPTER VI.

### EUROPEAN JOURNEY.

ÆT. 42-43. 1822-1823.

BEFORE following Mr. Channing in his travels abroad, it may be well, for the end of showing the delight with which he looked on nature and his capacity for enjoying beauty, to present some sketches of scenery from letters written during a journey through New Hampshire and Vermont, in the summer of 1821.

"*Centre Harbour, New Hampshire*, July 31, 1821. Very soon an ascent opened to us a prospect which made us forget past inconveniences. On our right, we discovered a noble range of mountains, their declivities towards us thrown into shade, and their waving outline, gentle and beautiful, forming an affecting contrast with their grandeur and solemnity. I have just learned that among them was the Ossipee, of which you have often heard. Below them was a sheet of water of considerable extent, called the 'Little Bay,' the more distant part of it darkened by the eminences beyond, and the part which was nearest to us brightened by the sun's light, which fell on it through a soft mist. The mist was dense enough to be impressed with the shadows of the trees on the neighbouring heights, so as to give a singular mixture of light and shade in its thin and ethereal substance, yet not so dense as to prevent a dim, visionary reflection of the trees in the tranquil surface of the water. Have I helped you to look through my eyes?"

"*Wednesday morning. Centre Harbour.* From the east windows, at which I now sit, and out of which my eye often steals, I look down immediately on the lake, but not on such a sheet of water as your imagination probably represents to you. I learned, before I reached it, that the Winnipiseogee was studded with islands of considerable extent, and in great number, so that you can take in but a small part of it from the shores. But whilst this detracts from its unity and grandeur, you find beauties of another kind. The channels which divide the islands, the numerous points and projections, the shores fringed with trees, by multiplying the lights and casting shadows on the water, give great interest to the scene. The shore opposite to me is covered with pines, stretching to some distance, and beyond them rises the noble Ossipee, which, covered with the light mist that now floats over it, I have, more than once, when accidentally glancing up, taken for a vast mass of clouds. My eye rests upon it with increasing pleasure, and I feel, that, were I neighbour to a mountain, I should establish a friendship with it, perhaps more intimate than I have formed with any part of nature. My mind seems to enlarge, to swell with these majestic forms, which claim kindred with the skies."

"*Sharon, White River, Vermont*, Aug. 1. I wish I could communicate to you my sensations. The river was just below us to the west. The country on the other side, of which our view had been limited by hills rising from the stream, opened, both to the north and south, into two wide, far-reaching, and gently ascending valleys, — if, indeed, they were hollowed enough to be so called. These valleys, or rather expanses, did not swell gradually through their whole extent, as they receded to the horizon, but were intersected in a free and bold style with elevations rising one behind another, each giving to the eye a line of shrubbery and foliage, on the tops of which the sun shed a rich, mellow light, whilst

the sides towards us were thrown into shade. Not that there was much regularity in this; for the passing clouds distributed unequally the splendors of the sunshine. The prospect was magnificent, to a wonderful degree, and you would have called it grand, had not beauty, a soft, touching beauty, so melted its parts into one another, and so spread harmony and gentleness over the whole, as to assert its claim above sublimity in the scene. We began with expressing our admiration; but silence soon showed that the heart was too much softened for talking. When I tell you that tears flowed, you will understand that they were not mine, for the fountain lies very deep in me; but I give you no fiction. In one sentiment we all afterwards agreed, that we could endure the grandeur through which we had lately passed much better than this loveliness and tenderness of beauty. The last exhausted us; the first gave an exulting, triumphant feeling. I relate merely our sensations. I have been too busy to analyze or to try to explain them."

"*White River*, Aug. 6. As I ascended towards its source, its animating characteristics grew more and more striking, and I felt its power. It is indeed a peculiar stream, and forms a remarkable contrast with the Connecticut, into which it empties. The moment you leave the point where they meet, — I may say, the very first step you take on White River, — you feel that you are forming a new acquaintance, that you have found a river of different features and habits, not contented to wind slowly and silently through fertile and smooth banks, but full of spirit and youthful sportiveness; loving solitudes, not for meditation, but that it may leap and dance without restraint, and listen to its own brisk murmurs, multiplying its quick turns, as if eager for change, — rushing against the stones and rocks, like youth engaging in mock contests.

"The whole stream has an exhilarating character from

its beginning; but it was not until the afternoon, under a glorious sky, that I felt its power. In a short time, the banks began to rise more precipitously and to a greater height, and the turns of the river were more sudden, and the bank on which we rode steeper, so that we found ourselves in the midst of the wildest scenery which I remember. Before, behind, all around us, were heights thrown together in a confused manner, sometimes quite hemming us in, sometimes opening into views of wide extent, and receiving from the sun a most various, shifting light. Indeed, such confusion of lights and shades, of effulgence and fainter illumination, you cannot easily conceive. I found the effect on my own mind quite different from that of former scenery. It was not as exalting as the mountain grandeur of New Hampshire, but it exhilarated me more, and gave me the very excitement which an invalid needs.

"This very striking scenery continues but a few miles. Then the banks recede more gradually, the hills slope more gently; the stream seems willing to refresh itself, amidst its brisk movements, with spots of quiet beauty. Still it keeps up its consistency. It slumbers nowhere; and when its surface is smoothest, you will here and there see a rock or stone breaking its uniformity and making its motion visible by a little eddy or a line of depression on the water."

"*Sandy Hill, New York*, Aug. 7. After passing through much the same scenery as we had seen towards the end of the preceding day's journey, we addressed ourselves to a labor which we had anticipated with no little interest; I mean the ascent of the Green Mountains. Here we left our pleasant companion, the White River, and began to follow one of its branches, a narrower, but still noisier and more precipitous stream. Very soon we were conscious of having entered a nobler and more solemn region than we had yet explored. I had expected to scale mountains which were to

open to me an immense extent of prospect; but I found myself plunged into one of nature's deepest recesses. I ascended through a cleft, on both sides of which rose steeps, sometimes of a vast height, clothed with woods to their very tops. So profound a solitude I have never known. I seemed to feel as if I were cast into a world of immeasurable forests. So entire and absorbing is the impression which you receive from the heights and depths around you, any one of which has power to fill the eyes and the mind by its masses and sweeps of noble trees, that the scenes you have left are blotted out; you live for the time only in the grand, glorious scene that swells around you. The openings which are here and there made into the forests, by large rocks or the rushing stream, only seem to conduct your eye into interminable depths of foliage and shade. Above you, after you have been ascending perhaps a mile, tower mountain-tops which seem to sink you into a valley, though you are conscious of having left the lowland world far beneath. This passage through the mountains gives no particular scenes to be described. Its power lies in the general, deep, overpowering impression which it makes. . . . . .

"On Tuesday morning, we began to follow again the Onion River, which wound among hills less bold than those we had seen the day before; but, viewed through the misty light of the morning, they gave us continual pleasure, until we reached a spot which had power to efface for a time all other impressions. Nobody had whispered to us that we were to meet any thing extraordinary. You will judge, then, of our astonishment and delight, when, after hearing for a few minutes an unusual tumult, we found ourselves on a bridge, which discovered to us, on both sides, a deep, rocky, perpendicular ravine, through which the river, contracted to a few yards, was rushing, raging, foaming, as if it had reserved all its might and passion for this single spot. The ravine or cleft seemed to me a quarter or sixth of a mile in

length, and so straight, that from two or three points the eye could command nearly its whole extent. The cliffs rose perpendicularly to the height, I should think, of forty to sixty feet, in parallel lines of solid rock. That so remarkable a rapid should not even have been named to us was matter of wonder, and proved how little impression is made by the mighty works of God. We clambered to the highest point of the banks, and looked down the giddy steep with an emotion which had hardly been surpassed at Glen's Falls.....

"We soon found ourselves entering a region which drew from us exclamations of increasing delight and admiration. We had heard that the pass through which our road lay was called 'The Gulf,' and that we were to pass the range which is eminently called the Green Mountains, not by scaling them, as before, but by threading a valley at their feet. Still, so little was said, that we expected little. How can I express our feelings when the true glory of this spot was revealed to us? Instead of ascending, as on our former route, a long and steep cleft, hemmed in on each side by precipices of forests, we now followed a road of easy ascents and descents. On one side the bank rose suddenly, so that its height could not easily be seen; but on the other rushed the branch of the White River, removing to a sufficient distance the mountains from which it separated us, so as to enable us to see distinctly their declivities, and outlines, and forests. In our former passage, we left our carriage from necessity, — here, from choice, — and we walked perhaps a mile through this deep valley, lifting our astonished eyes to the towering and beautiful summits, which seemed worthy of the region they inhabited.

"Represent to yourself a succession of mountains through more than a mile's extent, rising almost perpendicularly from their bases, sometimes stretching before us in a line, sometimes forming a majestic sweep, opening as we advanced, so as to discover their outlines and distinct masses, and clothed

to the very top with the freshest, richest, most luxuriant foliage. I was astonished to see such perpendicular heights, in which it seemed scarcely possible that trees should take root, so closely wooded that the eye could not discover a speck of dark earth amidst their boundless verdure. To say that the woods were green would give you no idea of them. They had the brightness and tenderness of spring, with the fulness of summer; and, instead of presenting a confused mass of verdure, their tops were so distinct, that the grace and majesty of particular trees might easily be traced. The light and temperature favored us, and we lingered, most unwilling to take the last look."

In a letter, written soon after his return, and which is of additional interest, as showing how solemn were his associations with the scenery of Newport, he thus refers to the influence of natural beauty.

"*Portsmouth, Rhode Island*, Sept. 6, 1821. That journey was a specimen of the life I have led for many years. One day undoes the work of many weeks. When I seem to have gained strength, a cold, caught I know not how, or some derangement of the system, perhaps produced by some slight irregularity, takes from me my power of body and mind, and then I slowly work my way upwards, to fall as low again.

"My journey, I have said, was not lost; and this I should say, even had I returned without one additional particle of strength; for it left impressions and recollections which will make me richer and happier for life. This magnificent creation has been to me, even from my boyhood, a principal source of happiness; but I never entered into its spirit, felt its power and glories, as on this journey. I should hardly dare to travel over the same ground again, lest the bright images which are treasured up in memory should be dimmed by a second sight.

"But nature was not my chief enjoyment. I owed much to my companions, who gave more than they received. Perhaps, if I were to name the circumstance in which I consider myself most enviably distinguished, I should say, it is the intimacy which I have enjoyed, and still enjoy, with so many of the first and best of your sex. I could not have ended my journey with as unrepining a spirit as I did, had I not had a home to receive me, which I am weak enough to think the best home on earth, and which had gone with me and secretly mixed with all my joys among the mountains, lakes, and rivers, which seemed to divide me from it.....

"I was powerfully reminded of the early years of my life, when these shores were my favorite and almost constant haunts. Then, before I knew you, I had not 'found rest to my soul,' for I was very much a stranger to true religion. My spirit, consumed with passionate fires, thirsted for some unknown good, and my body pined away to a shadow under the workings of a troubled mind. Then I spent almost whole days on the sea-shore, where the majesty and power of nature, absorbing, exalting me, and transporting me beyond myself, ministered most happily to the diseased soul. Strange as it may seem, I can recollect that I became buoyant and exhilarated in proportion to the wildness and sublimity around me, and I leaped for joy when a wave, which seemed to menace ruin, broke on the rock where I stood, and mounted in clouds to the skies. Thanks to God, those days of tumult are past, and an existence, the beginning of which is still a mystery to me, and which was wrapt in many clouds, has opened into blessings which I should not have dared to anticipate."

It was at the close of the month of May, 1822, that Mr. Channing bade farewell to his three blooming children, to his parent, family, friends, society, and, in

company with his wife, sailed for England. On the eve of departure, he thus wrote to his mother: —

"*May 27th*, 1822.

"My Dear Mother: — I cannot go without leaving you a line. At this moment, when I think of my approaching separation from you, I recall, with more than usual tenderness, your affection and your claims, and I pray God to reward and crown you with his best blessings.

"It is one of my greatest griefs, that I do not leave you in better health, and I beg you to neglect no means of building it up. I inclose a hundred dollars, which I wish you to spend very much for this object.

"I cannot but believe that you would be happier, if you would relinquish housekeeping; and you will see, in my letter from Lucy, how entirely she agrees with me. Ruth joins with me in assuring you, that, if you could be happy at our house on our return, we should rejoice to receive you.

"I hope you will not be anxious about us. We sail under every advantage, and I have a cheering hope that I shall return to be more to my family and people than I have been. You will often hear from us, either immediately or through other friends; and should any thing prevent free communication, you will remember that we are always under the care of Him who alone makes home a place of safety, and who can make every place equally secure. My spirits are wonderfully sustained. I go with a cheerful, confiding mind, and hope that, whilst I am remembered with affection, I shall not be with sorrow.

"My dear mother, may many years be added to your life, and may they be brightened by the increasing affection, usefulness, and virtues of your children. You will be the object of my daily prayers, and I know I shall not be forgotten in yours.

"Your grateful and affectionate son."

With the aid of extracts selected from his journals and correspondence, let us now rapidly follow Mr. Channing during a year which, with all its rich experiences, was to him one of exile, rather than of enjoyment. And first, from the notes of his voyage, we will take a few passages which manifest the buoyant, fresh joy with which he watched the changes of ocean.

"*June* 25. On this day I was exhilarated by a truly magnificent scene. The wind was strong and fair, and had called the ocean, after its long repose, into new life. The sky, obscured with clouds, gave to the waves that dark, polished hue, for which I can find no name, and which is one of their most beautiful colors. Exceedingly minute ripples hurried, swept, flew over the surface, and marked the fleetness of the wind as distinctly as if that subtile element had become the object of sight. Every sail was expanded and swelled into a graceful form, as if eager to enjoy the favoring breeze. The ship seemed to have caught the life and spirit of the elements, rushing forward, as for a prize, cleaving the dark waves, and dashing them from her sides in an azure sparkling brine and a foam of snowy whiteness, as if to brighten and deck her triumphant flight. In such moments, the soul seems to add to its own energies the power which is vivifying nature and exults in the consciousness of a more intense existence. . . . . .

"The sight of the sea-bird struck me with its loneliness. I thought of its spending the night on the ocean. But I remembered that it had no home to forget, and considered what a bed it must find on the waves. The sea-bird is rocked in nature's cradle, and enjoys a sleep which few find on shore. How many, torn with passion or remorse, might envy it! There is a striking contrast in the rough, mighty ocean being thus the chosen dwelling of repose. . . . . .

"The soul and nature are attuned together. Something within answers to all we witness without. When I look on the ocean in its might and tumult, my spirit is stirred, swelled. When it spreads out in peaceful blue waves, under a bright sky, it is dilated, yet composed. I enter into the spirit of the earth, and this is always good. Nature breathes nothing unkind. It expands, or calms, or softens us. Let us open our souls to its influences. . . . . .

"The ocean is said to rage, but never so to me. I see life, joy, in its wild billows, rather than rage. It is full of spirit, eagerness. In a storm, we are not free to look at the ocean as an object of sentiment. Danger then locks up the soul to its true influence. At a distance from it, we might contemplate it as a solemn minister of Divine justice and witness of God's power to a thoughtless world; but we could associate with it only moral ideas, — not a blind rage. At least, I have seen nothing which gives nature an unkind expression. . . . . .

"We talk of *old* ocean, hoary ocean; I cannot associate age with it. It is too buoyant, animated, living. Its crest of foam is not hoariness, but the breaking forth of life. Ocean is perpetual youth. . . . . .

"In a gale, you are struck with the tumultuous restlessness of the ocean. Instead of lengthened waves, it mounts and swells irregularly, as if too full of life, too impatient, to submit to any rule. The waves chase one another eagerly, and with an intractable vehemence, and break and whiten through excess of spirit. They do not seem to rise by a foreign impulse, but spontaneously, exultingly. You are reminded of the agency of the wind, not by the large, precipitous masses of water which are tossed so confusedly around you, for these seem instinct with their own life; you see the wind in their torn, and ruffled, and swept surfaces, and in the spray which flashes and is whirled and scattered from their tops. It is truly an animating scene. You feel your-

self in the midst of life and power, and hear air and ocean joining their voices of might to inspire a kindred energy. There is awe, — not a depressing, but triumphant awe. Our spirits mix with the elements, and partake the fulness of their power.

" There is constant variety in such a scene. The ' trough,' as the sailor calls it, is, in fact, a valley in the ocean, and, on each side, waves higher than the ship bound your view. In a moment, you ride on these mountains, and a wide horizon opens on you, the distinct line of which is broken by heaps of ocean, sometimes rising into peaks, which break as soon as formed, and give place to new creations. Vast structures thus grow and vanish almost in an instant, and the eye finds no resting-place in the perpetual revolutions. The waves, swelling above, and approaching, as if to overwhelm you, though they do not alarm, show a power so akin to destruction, as to give a momentary sensation of danger, and the spirit feels something of the pleasure of escape, when the ship is seen to triumph over its invaders.

" There is, too, a feeling of elevation, when, in such a scene, where nature is in uproar, and putting forth around us her mightiest energies, we are conscious of inward serenity, feel ourselves unshaken in the tumult and alive to adoration and joy. The soul has a consciousness of greatness, in possessing itself, and in converting into the nourishment of its noblest emotions the might and majesty of the universe. . . . . .

" There is great beauty joined with this majesty, as through all nature. We seldom see more power. The awful mountain top delights to bathe its grandeur in the richest, softest beams of the rising or setting sun ; sweet flowers wave and smile in the chasms of the precipice : and so the mountain billow often breaks into sparkling spray, and the transparent arch beneath shines with an emerald brightness, which has hardly a rival in the richest hues of the vegetable creation.

"After witnessing a gale, I was shut up for several days in the cabin, and did not return to the deck, until a remarkable change had taken place. A calm had succeeded. It was hard to connect what I now saw with my last view of the ocean, to feel that I was looking on the same element. The irregular, broken, wildly tossing, tumultuous billows had vanished, and lengthened, continuous, slowly advancing swells followed one another, not as in pursuit, but as if finding pleasure in gentle motion.

"Instead of bursting into foam, or being tossed into infinite inequalities by the sweeping, hurrying winds, their polished, molten surface, whilst varied by soft flowing lines, was unruffled by a single breath. They seemed, as they rolled in regular intervals towards us, like the gentle heaving of a sleeping infant's breast. I did not feel as if the ocean was exhausted by its late efforts, but as if, having accomplished its manifestations of awe-inspiring might, it was now executing a more benignant ministry, speaking of the mercy and the blissful rest of God. Perhaps no image of repose is so perfect as the tranquillity of an element so powerful and so easily wrought into tumult. I looked, and was at peace."

The following hints may serve to illustrate the observant and inquiring habits of the writer. He was apparently reading, at the time, Playfair, and Brande's History of Chemistry, the progress of which science he watched through life with eager expectation and admiring awe.

"The light and heat of the sun on the ocean may seem unprofitable. Not so. The heat is absorbed in vapor, and, when given out by condensation of vapor into rain, it is imparted to the atmosphere. Hence good done by raining, at sea, as well as on land. Air is softened. . . . . .

"Heat greater at sea than on shore, because so much

heat is evolved by evaporation and condensation, less absorbed than on shore. Hence islands warmer, especially if fogs predominate. . . . . .

" The wind not useless on ocean. Evaporation greatly produced by succession of strata of air, and by *forms* given to *waves*, — the curve. Does not motion, too, separating the spray, favor evaporation ? . . . . .

" Evaporation and condensation, — may they not purify atmosphere ? Rain water not pure. May not this action in the atmosphere do good ? How far may electricity be evolved in these processes ? We speak of air as close, stifling, &c., and its fitness for respiration depends on what we cannot discover. Electricity a cause. There is constant solution and crystallization of salt in ocean, by evaporation and rain. Is no electricity generated here ? . . . . .

" The heat given, by formation of vapor, to upper regions of atmosphere may be very useful ; for, were they not thus heated, the contrast between them and those lower might be so great, as to render the exchange which takes place between them injurious. Heated air ascends, and is replaced, one would think, from above. . . . . .

" The ocean preserved from heat by evaporation. Hence, winds, passing over it, refresh warm countries. This heat, withdrawn from the surface, is given out by condensation in upper regions which need it. What a beautiful order ! . . . . .

" What a beautiful appointment, that the sun, which heats and dries the earth, should raise the cloud to shelter it, and the rain to moisten it ; and that heat, which seems, at first, at war with moisture, should conjoin with it in rearing the plant ! . . . . .

" Nature subsists by counteracting powers ; and in this we see wisdom, arrangement, beauty. . . . . .

" Moisture the universal nutriment, and what a noble fountain of it ! . . . . .

" Strong winds at sea are essential to the fulfilment of its

functions, — to evaporation and transportation of vapor, as well as to navigation. The ocean useless without wind, and how it is swept by it! . . . . .

"A beautiful appointment, that the sun gives impulse to the winds, by which his beams are mitigated on shore, by which the vapor of ocean is multiplied and transported, and, of course, by which the earth is preserved from being parched. . . . . .

"How beneficial is motion in air and sea! Elements capable of being quickened by heat keep the balance of the universe. . . . . .

"Great powers in the universe, balancing one another by mighty energy, make creation more interesting. Would not less intensity of heat, creating and requiring less motion of winds, vapors, sea, be attended with less activity of animal and vegetable nature? These great powers in nature call forth great energy and skill in man, give impulse and life to the soul, reveal the sublimity and beauty of creation. . . . . .

"What immense distributions of moisture and equalizations of temperature are needed! Are the agents too mighty?"

On landing at Liverpool, Mr. Channing met with the warmest welcome from many liberal-minded friends, whose hearts had been already prepared, by his writings and reputation, to receive him. But he found himself utterly unfitted, by weakness and depression, to bear the pleasing excitement of forming acquaintances; and, hastily bidding farewell to the intelligent, humane, refined, and munificent circle which opened to him their hospitable homes, he departed upon his journey to the Lakes. A few extracts from his journals will show what refreshment he found amidst the exquisite scenery of Westmoreland and Cumberland.

"*Lancaster*, July 11. The castle at Lancaster is, to a stranger, singularly interesting. It was the first noble monument I had seen of times which, however fierce and lawless, must still be regarded as rich to overflowing in generous feeling, and as containing, in a rude state, the principles of the great social changes which have since been developed. It is now a heterogeneous mass, — the modern additions seeming to be in fine taste, when viewed in detached parts, but having no unity, and wholly failing in correspondence with the remains of the ancient fabric. The chief of these is a gateway, protected by two towers, the battlements overhanging the base, and bearing record to the violence of an age when lordly power felt the want of a security that is now enjoyed equally by the high and low.

"This castle, of which Edward the Third was the founder, once the seat of strength and magnificence of the dukes of Lancaster, is now crowded with felons, debtors, lunatics, and has become a workshop for convicts, an asylum for madness, a court-house, with its jury-rooms, crown and county halls, and the labyrinth of offices in which justice so often loses her way. What a monument this singular building is of the spirit and condition of past and present times! The hammer once sounded here, riveting arms; the culprit now wields it in forging the most vulgar utensils for the cook or ploughboy. Once it set at defiance the authority of the state, and the owner measured all rights by the sword; now the judge, with no signs of power but an enormous wig and robe, administers, we hope impartially, equal laws, to which the lives and property of all orders are subject. Once it resounded with shouts, the neigh of steeds, the clang of armor, the joyful tumult of a boundless hospitality; now the taskmaster metes out cheerless labors to the guilty or unfortunate prisoners, and the high orders of society enter it only to break its silence with the jargon of law or the sentence of death. That was an age of wild, unre-

strained action of our nature, when society was now shaken by the whirlwinds of passion, now brightened by flashes of heroic, generous feeling, when man was a terror or a glory in his sphere, when stronger dependencies and more relentless passions, more devoted attachments and more desolating feuds, gave society at once a more delightful and yet a more fearful interest than at present. How various is our nature! How shall we unite into one social state the virtues, principles, joys, which have marked its different stages?"

*July 13th to 18th.* "I am now at Pooley's Bridge, Ulles Water, and have to look back on days of activity, enjoyment, and various perceptions and sensations which can hardly be recalled. Scenes of grandeur, and wildness, and beauty have passed before my eyes and through my mind so rapidly, that I shrink from the task of separating them. My pleasure has been greatly impaired by the state of my health, fettering me amidst most alluring objects, checking my ascent of hills, forbidding me to penetrate depths and moist places, to expose myself to the damp winds of the lakes, &c. Still I have enjoyed much.

"Saturday I spent on Windermere, a lake of great beauty, the most cheerful of this glorious company, spreading into wider expanses, seeming less desirous of privacy and solitude, and encircled with banks less high and precipitous, as if it wished greater communion with nature. It has more *beauty* than any I have seen. It is twelve miles long and perhaps three miles in its greatest breadth; but its width generally is less, so that the opposite banks may be comprehended in one view, and their projections made to combine with the islands to give almost an infinite variety to its mild surface. Its distinguishing charm lies in its finely marked and varied outline. Here the land gently swells into the lake, and there the water seeks a more deep repose in bays or coves which it has formed by a kindly soliciting influence from the shore. There are occasionally points of some

boldness, enough to prevent tameness. But the land and water seem never to have contended for empire. Where the former advances, it is gradually, not by sharp, angular projections, but graceful curves, and it clothes itself with a richer, fresher verdure, as if to shed new glory over the lake; and when the water encroaches, you might easily imagine that it was only that it might spread a calm surface beneath the hills, to reflect more vividly their forms and hues.

"The islands are numerous, varying in size, and to one who sails on the lake, their combinations with one another and with the shore open an almost endless number of channels, and form mazes of beauty which allure the eye and stimulate the imagination by partially disclosed scenery and a mysterious intricacy. These islands and the shores in general, through culture and the kindness of this moist climate, are clothed in a robe of rich verdure, and some of the former are finely wooded, so that the lovely hues of the reflected heavens and the vernal earth are blended together. In some parts the shore is almost level with the water, so that in a calm the line which severs them is lost, and the spirit of peace which breathes here seems to blend these opposite elements into one. At other times, it swells gently, and then more boldly, though I do not recollect a single fronting crag. At the northern termination, however, mountains of a wild grandeur, somewhat softened by distance, rear their heads, as if by contrast to increase the impression of the generally peaceful character of the lake. I cannot say, however, that, in the elevations or hills which skirt most of the lake, I saw much beauty, except as they were generally verdant. Their outlines have no peculiar grace. The lake, too, sometimes resembles a river too much.

"I did not find that the positions which commanded the widest views, and which are therefore selected as favorite *spots by tourists*, were always the best. Wide views seldom

have that harmony on which unity of impression depends, and the mind suffers from a variety which gives it a shock by discords of hues and forms, or at least dissipates it too much to allow of the feeling of concentrated joy.

"The day was peculiarly favorable, and, though I sailed at noon, the prospect was not injured by a glaring or monotonous light, The clouds veiled the sky, but occasionally parted to throw gleams of lustre on island, shore, or lake; whilst a gentle intermitting breeze now drew transient, slowly moving ripples on the surface of the water, and now left the element unbroken, as if to fulfil its office of responding in perfect harmony to the heavens. . . . . .

"The effect of stations depends very much on the light, and the condition of the atmosphere. The same prospect is an entirely different thing at sunrise or sunset, under a warm or a cold sky. I feel that I have done little justice to the lakes, and the scenery round them, in my hasty view. To see a fine prospect under one light is like looking at a countenance in a single attitude and with one expression. No wonder that many are disappointed, and that descriptions are given of this country which seem, to travellers who see it at different seasons, wholly fictitious. Beauty depends on connection and harmony. A feature of a prospect, which, when thrown into shade or softened by mist, gives to its whole a great charm, may become a deformity, when seen through a clear atmosphere under a bright sun. I know, as yet, little of this country's powers and resources in relation to the imagination, although I have seen enough to delight me, and make me wish to spend a season here. . . . . .

"Next we visited Grassmere Water, — a sacred spot, a seclusion from all that is turbulent and unholy in life. It was near sunset as we approached this water. We found ourselves descending a mount called Loughrigg into a valley, in which reposed this sweet lake, unruffled, smooth, hemmed in by sheltering mountains. The solemn heights

towards the setting sun showed to us their dark sides reflected with wonderful distinctness in the still bosom of the lake, within whose waters they seemed to find even a quieter abode than in the tranquil heavens into which their tops ascended. This repetition of the dark sides of the mountains threw a solemn shade over the part of the lake to which the reflection was confined, whilst beyond this line a mild light, answering to that of the heavens, and of other mountains, gleamed from the water, investing it at one moment with various, but not inharmonious, forms of beauty.

"The effect of this lake on the spirit was immediate, deep, penetrating the inmost soul, and awakening a feeling of something profound in one's own nature. Windermere was tranquil, but it had a cheerful tranquillity. Its genius was peace, but peace with a smiling aspect, wooing society and sympathy. Grassmere seemed to be spread out in the mountain recesses as an abode for lonely, silent, pensive meditation, — for the inspired imagination, which, in still abstraction from vulgar realities, would give itself up to ideal beauty, — for the spirit of love, which, wearied with man's strifes and passions, would meet and commune with a kindred spirit in nature, — for piety to approach God without distraction, to see him in the harmony, to hear him in the silence of his creation. The character of this place is that of seclusion, but not of stern or sorrowful seclusion, congenial with the mind which injury or disappointment has made impatient or sick of the world. It invites rather the mild enthusiast, who amidst the deformities of life still sees what is lovely in human nature, and at a distance from the tumults of society would resign himself to visions of moral beauty, of perfect loveliness, and of sublime virtue, unknown on earth, — who is conscious of the capacities of human nature for what is good and great, and desires, under the kindliest influences of the universe, to call forth into new life these high principles in his own soul.

"On descending to this sweet lake, I felt my spirit stilled, as if I were throwing off the robe of this world's cares and passions, and escaping into a region of more than human purity and peace, without, however, losing my human sympathies.

"The lake has not left, perhaps, very definite traces of figure, &c., on my mind, for in such a scene the mind is not stimulated to analyze. The heart and imagination are too absorbed for curious observation. It is rather circular, and wants the multiplied diversities of outline, the points, bays, recesses of Windermere, and this, perhaps, aids its effect, for the eye is not excited to wander in search of beauties half hid in mazy openings. The soul is free to receive an unmixed impression from the simple, harmonious scene. When it is said that the surrounding mountains are bold, some precipitous, and one of them a rugged steep seamed with storms and strewed with rocky fragments, it may seem strange that the lake can have the character of mild repose which has been ascribed to it; but, spreading as it does in a circle, it so parts the surrounding mountains, that they cannot be grouped as if they bordered a narrower stream, and thus they become subordinate accompaniments to, instead of being the chief features of, the prospect. Then the immediate shore of the lake is level and verdant, and blends singularly with the peaceful water. This is particularly true with respect to the vale, properly so called, which spreads between the head of Grassmere and Helm's Crag, whose surface is almost as unbroken as the lake, and which, clothed as it is with the freshest verdure, varied by hedgerows, and combining with its natural beauty the most affecting tokens of humanity by its simple cottages and Gothic churches, communicates an inexpressible character of peace and benignity, and of gentle and holy sweetness, to the whole scene. The mountains thus severed from one another, and rising from so peaceful a foundation, seem ex-

alted only to guard the sacred seclusion of the lake from the profanation of worldly passions, that it may hold pure intercourse with the mild and pure sky, which it reflects so tranquilly, with the glorious sun, and the genial breezes. In such spots we can hardly help believing in a better existence than this, for we seem to have entered its confines. A faith springs up, not the less sincere or unreal because the growth of sentiment, a faith in the high purposes of our being, and our capacity of purer joys than we experience in our ordinary modes of life.

"There is a melancholy in visiting such scenes as I have now described; but is this their direct and natural effect, or does it spring from a silent consciousness of the difference between our perturbed state and the intense quiet of soul breathed into us by such a spot? We feel Grassmere to be a shelter; but a shelter includes the idea of the storms of passion. Thus a sad sense of our actual being mingles with aspirations for a higher existence; but this sadness is so tempered and subdued by the power of the beautiful scene, that it becomes a tender, grateful, melancholy feeling. A more delicious state of heart and mind than comes from those blended emotions is, perhaps, unknown to human nature. . . . . .

"This country owes its interest chiefly to its mountains, for without these its lakes would be of little note. These are the grand features of every scene; they not only cause the valleys and masses of water, but give them their peculiar beauty, their tranquil sweetness, or their secluded solemnity. These mountains surpass all others which I have seen in expression and spirit. They are, indeed, sometimes fantastic, but seldom or never tame or heavy. Their outline is, for the most part, sweeping and graceful, though frequently broken by craggy precipices and abrupt steeps. They are not arranged in long lines, but are thrown together in a bold, irregular style, so that they combine with one another

in endless variety, half concealing each other, giving imagination scope, and opening labyrinths of sweet valleys. Their sides present a diversified surface, now fine swells, and then chasms or furrows, worn by torrents and roughened by projecting rocks. All these combine to give them an air of wild grandeur; and the quiet valleys and lakes give an inexpressible charm, when seen reposing amidst and beneath these stern and rugged guardians. The calm, still water reflecting the mountains, especially when thrown into solemn shade, has singular power over the mind. Communicating as it does its own tranquil spirit to the romantic forms which it receives into its bosom, it seems to manifest a peace-breathing influence which nothing can resist. . . . . .

"I was not so deeply impressed by any mountain as by Skiddaw, which is the more remarkable, as having nothing of the wild character that I have noticed in the other mountains. Its distinction is tranquil majesty. It rises gradually and with extensive sweeps from the valley, and its outline is more flowing than that of any of its numberless associates. Yet, so bold are the swells on its surface; its valleys, if we may so call them, open such broad expanses to the eye; its summits stretch along the horizon with such generous freedom; and it towers with an expression of such spontaneous energy, that, whilst we rest on its mildness with delight, the mind is dilated with a feeling of its grandeur. No sublimity is so real as that which makes itself deeply felt in union with beauty; just as the highest moral greatness is that which, whilst it awes by unshaken constancy of principle, at the same time attracts us by the gentleness of love. Wild scenes, where power is manifested in desolation, act at first with great force on the mind, especially on the least refined; but power and goodness are congenial, and the highest manifestations of power are benignant. The power which reveals itself solemnly amidst beauty, by this very circumstance shows its grandeur, and acquires a more

enduring sway over the soul. I found myself never wearied with Skiddaw. It lifted my spirit. Scenes of ruin are apt to subdue us; but the highest forms of sublimity exalt us by inspiring a consciousness of kindred might. And such was the influence of this mountain. It made the lake and all surrounding objects its ministers. The mists were rolling tranquilly over its summits, partial lights were wandering across its face, and it seemed in full harmony with the noblest agents and elements of nature. . . . . .

"There is one most happy effect, which should be particularly noticed. Distance, the atmosphere, fogs, and various lights give to the tops of mountains a visionary, sometimes a mysterious, character, better felt than described, which forms a most interesting contrast with the general massiveness of their foundations. These awful forms seem to be spiritualized as they ascend, till they blend with the pure heavens, and sometimes through the thin mist almost melt into air. This union of the firmness of earth with the ethereal brightness of the skies gives a peculiar charm to mountains. In fact, they unite remarkably opposite expressions. By their foundations they seem to sink into the earth, and our thoughts are carried to its gloomiest depths, whilst their tops aspire to heaven and dwell in a region of peace and splendor. Whilst we are impressed by the huge bulk and weight of their inert forms, their visionary tops give them the appearance of belonging to the pure element in which they live, of possessing a congenial spirit with the free and buoyant air, and of having risen through their own life and energy to hold communion with the sun."

We have already seen the reverent affection with which Mr. Channing regarded Wordsworth, and it will be readily understood, therefore, that he joyfully availed himself of this opportunity to seek an interview with the *poet.* *In* a letter to a sister he thus describes his *visit* : —

"I could not but think of the amusement I should have afforded you, could you have taken a peep at me. I had spent Sunday morning at Grassmere, — one of the sweetest and most peace-breathing spots under the skies, — and in the afternoon, being unable to attend church, I resolved to visit Mr. Wordsworth, who resides two miles and a half from the inn. Unluckily, Grassmere, whilst it supplied the wants of the imagination and heart most abundantly, could not supply me with any vehicle for the body more easy or dignified than a cart, dragged by a horse who had caught nothing of the grace of the surrounding scene.

"After an interview of great pleasure and interest, I set out to return, and, unwilling to lose Mr. Wordsworth's society, I accepted his proposition that we should walk together until I was fatigued. At the end of half a mile my strength began to fail, and finding my companion still earnest in conversation, I invited him to take a seat with me, which he did; and in this state we reëntered the delightful valley. Happily the air was mild, and I began to think that Providence, in distributing lots, had not been so severe as one might at first be inclined to feel, in limiting multitudes to such a mode of conveyance; for I enjoyed the fine prospects of Rydal and Grassmere as I could not have done in a covered carriage.

"You, perhaps, might have promised me the honor of being introduced with the cart and horse into a 'lyrical ballad.' But to me, who, as you know, profess to be greatly in debt to Mr. Wordsworth's genius, and whose respect and affection were heightened by personal intercourse, there seemed a peculiar felicity in riding through this scene of surpassing tenderness, with a man of genius and sensibility, who had caught inspiration from the lakes and mountains in whose beauty I too had been rejoicing.

"Mr. Wordsworth's conversation was free, various, animated. We talked so eagerly as often to interrupt one

another. And as I descended into Grassmere near sunset, with the placid lake before me, and Wordsworth talking and reciting poetry with a poet's spirit by my side, I felt that the combination of circumstances was such as my highest hopes could never have anticipated."

Twenty years after this sunset ride, an American traveller was visiting Wordsworth, when the poet incidentally mentioned this interview, and said that one remark then made by Dr. Channing had remained fixed in his memory, and all the more deeply from the impressive tone of sincere feeling with which it was uttered. It was to this effect, — "that one great evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity was, that it contained nothing which rendered it unadapted to a progressive state of society, that it put no checks upon the activity of the human mind, and did not compel it to tread always blindly in a beaten path."

From Wordsworth our thoughts are led by an association, which time and change can never break, to his great compeer, Coleridge, whom Mr. Channing saw while in London during the following summer. And as there is nothing in the few notes of his rapid journey through England of especial interest, we will pass at once to a brief notice of this visit. Most fortunately, we are enabled to enrich our pages with Coleridge's own record of it, as given in the following letter to Washington Allston.

"*Highgate*, 13*th June*, 1823.

"My friend: — It was more than a gratification, it was a great comfort, to all of us, to see, sit, walk, and converse with two such dear and dearly respected friends of yours, as Mr. and Mrs. Channing.

"Mr. Channing I could not be said not to have known in

part before. It is enough to add, that the reality differed from my previous conception of it only by being more amiable, more discriminating, and more free from prejudices, than my experience had permitted me to anticipate. His affection for the good as the good, and his earnestness for the true as the true, — with that harmonious subordination of the latter to the former, without encroachment on the absolute worth of either, — present in him a character which in my heart's heart I believe to be the very rarest in earth. If you will excuse a play on words in speaking of such a man, I will say that Mr. Channing is a philosopher in both the possible renderings of the word. He has the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love.

"I was unfortunately absent the first evening. Had they been prevented from repeating their visit, I should have been vexed indeed, and yet not as much vexed as I now know I should have had reason to be. I feel convinced that the few differences in opinion between Mr. Channing and myself not only are, but would by him be found, to be apparent, not real, — the same truth seen in different relations. Perhaps I have been more absorbed in the depth of the mystery of the spiritual life, he more engrossed by the loveliness of its manifestations."

Mr. Channing had long been an admiring reader of what Coleridge had printed, and no words are needed to describe the pleasure with which, in common with all auditors, he listened to the fascinating monologue of the poet-philosopher, who had then entered upon certainly the most serene, and probably the most brilliant, period of his life. It seems, however, from the foregoing letter, that he conversed enough to leave a distinct image of himself. Out of this interview arose, at a later time, a foolish report, to which he once saw fit thus to refer.

The whole matter is, indeed, quite unimportant, yet some may feel an interest to know the facts.

"I find that certain newspapers have lately circulated a letter from England, in which the writer gives some details of an interview with Mr. Coleridge, and which contains the following passage: —

"'I was not a little surprised at his [Mr. Coleridge's] remarks concerning Dr. Channing of Boston; first, that Dr. Channing's short character of Bonaparte had its birth-place and received its shape in his [Mr. Coleridge's] study.'

"I may as well say, in relation to the statement here ascribed to Mr. Coleridge, that I can explain it only by supposing the writer of the letter to have misapprehended that gentleman. I have quite a distinct recollection of my only interview with Mr. Coleridge, and cannot remember that Bonaparte was even once named. I am confident that no remarks on his character, sufficiently interesting to be brought away, were made to me; for in that case some trace of them must have remained in my mind. I am the more confident on this point, because my recollections are confirmed by a friend who was present."

From England Mr. Channing went to Paris, where he passed but a few weeks, and then, journeying leisurely through France, entered Switzerland by the Jura. He was too unwell to avail himself freely of the rich opportunities for enjoyment so amply afforded by that most picturesque and romantic country; but a few extracts from his letters will show that bodily weakness could not deaden his spiritual energy.

*Geneva, Sept.* 28, 1822. "I find that I hardly knew the power of mountain scenery until I came hither, although I have not seen the noblest of the Alps, for I have not yet visited Mont Blanc, but only caught glimpses of his snowy

top at a distance, half wrapt in clouds. You probably know that the mountains of Switzerland are not distinguished by beauty of form, when taken separately. The storms have dealt with them too fiercely and too long, to leave them the fine outline which I have seen in our own country and in England. Their summits generally are rugged, naked, shattered crags; and you sometimes see the perpendicular, sharp rocks towering into the skies above the everlasting snows, which rest on the projecting surfaces beneath. It is not their harmonious proportion, then, but the air of awful power impressed upon them, — the perilous precipices by which they are bounded, the boldness with which they send up to heaven their wild tops, the prodigality and confusion with which they are scattered around, and the immense glaciers shining without apparent change or dissolution under the summer's snow, — which subdue the traveller creeping at their foot. These constitute the deep, solemn, mysterious charm that attracts the eye to gaze upon these giant forms. . . . . .

"Do you not envy me the beautiful, magnificent scenery which is now stretching around me? I shall never forget the day I spent at Berne. It was Sunday, and in the afternoon, under a most brilliant sky, I walked on the ramparts, and hailed with joy, as old friends, the mountains in the horizon which I had visited a few days before. All that nature can do to lift us above the sordid and selfish is done in Switzerland; and who can doubt that where there is a deep purpose in the soul to elevate itself, much aid may be derived from the sublimity of the external world? But without this purpose and inward effort, it can do little for us. Switzerland has benefited my health more than any other country. The air has been exhilarating, and I have looked on the mountains with a delight which almost gave me strength to climb them. . . . . .

"It is worth no little suffering to cross the Wingern Alp,

and scale the Grimsel. I had strength for neither. With what desire did I look to the Jungfrau! If I revisit Switzerland, one of my great pleasures will be to approach its base. This country has inspired me. I grew better almost as soon as I entered it."

The winter months were passed by Mr. and Mrs. Channing at Florence, Rome, and Naples. But as his letters and journals — written in haste, debility, and, as we shall presently see, in affliction — contain no descriptions of scenery or places which are particularly note-worthy, we will proceed at once to extract from his papers some general reflections upon society, which he seems to have preserved as hints for future thought. It is scarcely necessary to suggest, that, to one of his humane spirit, men and manners, the condition of the masses of the people, the tendency of governments, the influence of institutions, presented objects of interest far surpassing all that beauty in nature and art could offer.

"Has not every state of society a spirit, a *unity*? Do not its parts cohere? Can we judge of one habit, one trait of manners, one institution alone? Must not the *system* be understood, the *central* principles, the great *ends* to which the community is working? Are not a nation's whole tone of manners and cast of institutions the workings and manifestations of some law of life, combining the whole? Must there not be a secret accordance between the different parts of a nation's character and modes of living? Is there as much of an arbitrary character in these as we are apt to imagine? Is not the interior life the great thing to be inspected, the form of human nature which is presented in the given case? . . . . .

"The art of travelling is, to unite minute observation with large comparison, with penetrating insight into the

spirit of which visible modes of life are the body. The traveller should have the power of recognizing the common bond, principle, spring, aim, of the infinitely multifarious agencies composing what we call a Nation. . . . . .

" We must not depend on a people to show us what is most worthy of our attention; for they are actually unconscious of what is most important, *their own spirit*, and the influences by and from which it has been formed and is kept alive. . . . . .

" A great object in travelling is to discover by comparison what is primary and universal in our nature, to separate the adventitious, secondary, temporary, to learn the deep principles on which all permanent improvements are to rest, to behold and to love what is *human*, to shake off our prejudices in favor of the unessential modifications of our nature, and to recognize the *essential* through these modifications. . . . . .

" To go abroad that we may see the unessential, — new modes of dressing, eating, bowing, the exterior of man and life, — is a mere wasting of time. We should go to enlarge our views of human nature, to learn what it can do and suffer, to what it is equal, under what influences its powers are most developed, by what most crushed. The noblest use of travelling is, to discern more of the godlike in the human; and are there not marks, in the most degraded condition of society, of man's true glory? We may see at least some evil influences withstood, resisted, which shows an inward power not subdued, nor capable of subjection, by the most adverse circumstances. This power of seeing vital good is the true eye for a traveller. To visit distant countries only to collect mementos of the deformities of human nature, to fill our memory with images of the misshapen exterior under which humanity lies almost hidden, is worse than useless. We should strive to perceive, beneath the distortions of our nature, its real shape, its primitive tendencies

towards good. He who travels without learning to love his race more would do far better to stay at home. It is a poor business to rake into the corruptions of human nature, unless one believes in its capacity for restoration, and approaches its defilements only to cleanse them. A good man should turn from irremediable evils. To *love* is our work. . . . . .

"The intellectual education of the poor is talked of. Can the poor, as they are now situated, be taught much? What ideas does the poor child get in a common school? The true school of human nature is the sphere opened to its faculties and affections in our conditions in daily life. A state of society furnishing to all its members a field of action for the mind and heart gives the only true education; and is this to be looked for anywhere in outward institutions? Is it not to be found chiefly in the spirit of Christianity spread through a community, leading its members to a love and reverence of human nature, and to a regard to human excellence, in their arrangements for property, &c.? A spirit of self-sacrifice for common good must be made powerful in the most intelligent and influential. To improve men must be a chief consideration in employing them, and the good of the laborer must be regarded as well as the profit to be drawn from his toil. So long as this is thought romantic, society can have no bright prospect of permanent progress. . . . . .

"We are educating the poor that they may get a living, forgetting that they have a nature like our own, which cannot be confined to this end, and which, unless raised to high and generous ends, will work their own and others' misery. . . . . .

"The idea, that respectability and a certain rank cohere and are inseparable, is ruinous now. The true dignity of human nature is to be learned, and the consistency of this with very moderate circumstances. . . . . .

"Civil society abounds in *restraints* on our nature, where *development* should be the great aim. How little is now done to remove barriers to human powers and affections! The order of society has been thought to demand subordination, subjection, force, artificial manners, badges of different castes, — all cramping the soul. . . . . .

"Fashion is a chain on the soul. It is a yoke laid by superiors on inferiors, through opinion. It disposes of our time, attention, powers. It puts the stamp of worth, dignity, happiness, on actions and conditions, and prevents us from judging for ourselves. Originating with those who are raised above natural wants, and in whom the spirit of self-sacrifice is lost in self-indulgence, it gives currency to factitious, selfish pursuits and enjoyments. Thus the mind is perverted, contracted, filled with false views, and grows mechanical, torpid, lifeless. A society is improved in proportion as individuals judge for themselves, and from their own experience and feeling, and not according to general opinion. A man should look to his own soul to learn what makes him happiest, and to decide when he is conscious of acting most *in harmony with his whole nature.* But how few do so! . . . . .

"Genius is a liberating power. It accords with nature, detects natural feeling in the artificial arrangements of society, and discerns and enjoys the beautiful and lovely in our natural affections and moral sentiments. Thus a literature of genius withstands corruption, brings back higher minds to nature, counteracts fashion. . . . . .

"A society is advanced in proportion as human nature is respected. It is the misery of the present state, that man, *as man*, is counted of so little worth. It is man clothed in purple, dressed in a little brief authority, high-born, rich, &c., who is now considered as deserving power. A just estimate of human nature, of its purposes, powers, destiny, leading to general courtesy, respect, and effort for the advancement of this nature, in each and all, — this is the measure of the pro-

gress of society. When manners, and especially the *intercourse between different classes*, express this, society is truly flourishing. . . . . .

"The existence of a large class, cut off from the rest of the community, trained up to ignorance and vice, gross in manners, in no degree acted upon by other classes, and repressed only by brute force, is a sad feature of civilized society, and a reproach on more favored orders. The true organization of society is that in which all improvements of the higher are communicated to the lower classes, and in which intellect and virtue descend and are diffused. And will any thing but Christianity, moulding anew the whole spirit of the higher classes, bring about this end? . . . . .

"The influence of government is of great importance in judging of the state of society. A good government is that which, by manifesting a common, wide, universal care, diffuses a generous, impartial, disinterested spirit. A society is well organized, whose government recognizes the claims and rights of *all*, has no favorites, respects humanity in all its forms, and aims to direct the pursuits of *each to the general good*. Such a government implies the existence of a disinterested spirit in the community, and greatly strengthens it. This reaction is the most interesting view in public affairs. A society makes progress, just as far as a disinterested spirit, influencing the members, is embodied and manifested in institutions, laws, tribunals, and through these flows back with new energy to individuals. This is the highest end of government, its sublime, moral end. . . . . .

"Liberty is the great social good, — exemption from unjust restraints, — freedom to act, to exert powers of usefulness. Does a government advance this simply by establishing equal *laws*? The very protection of property may crush a large mass of the community, may give the rich a monopoly in land, may take from the poor all means of action. *Liberty* is a blessing only by setting man's powers at large,

exciting, quickening them. A poor man, in the present state of society, may be a slave, by his entire dependence. Is it not the true end of government, to aim at securing for all the widest field of useful action? This is to establish liberty. How far more important is this than to protect any single class! . . . . .

"The poor, weak, helpless, suffering, are the first objects for the care of government. Society improves in proportion as they are protected in the exercise of their rights. These high views of government, as a sacred institution for elevating all classes of men, are essential to an exalted community. Where government is considered as a prize for selfish ambition, society becomes degraded. . . . . .

"The best condition of society is that in which all ranks, classes, orders, are intimately connected and associated. The deformity of present society is the separation of ranks, the immense disparity, the inhuman distance of different orders. All men cannot be equal in all respects; but the high should feel their elevation to be a motive and obligation to labor for inferiors.

"There must be a body of enlightened, studious men. Let not these form a party, a faction, but consider their light as a good given to be diffused, and as a means to maintain an improving intercourse among all orders. So there will be rich men; but the rich, instead of herding together, and linking themselves to one another by common pleasures, privileges, refinements, ought to regard property as a trust for the good of those who are in want. Let there be no literary *class*, no *class* of rich. The learned, when forming a distinct class, become jealous, exacting, domineering, and seek to maintain their sway, even at the expense of truth. Scholars already begin to find the benefit of quitting their pedantic cells and mingling with general society; but still they associate too much with rich and refined, — still they seek honor and power. Their high office, of being lights to

society, is overlooked. How the rich injure themselves by a clannish spirit, corrupting one another by rivalry in show and expense! Christianity breaks down all these walls of division between man and man."

But the scenery, works of art, institutions, and social tendencies of the Old World could not wean Mr. Channing's affections from his home; and the following extracts from his letters manifest the tender solicitude with which he sought, while far away, to exert a good influence over his children: —

"*London*, Aug. 8, 1822. In the first place, I wish my children to be simple, natural, without affectation. Children are often injured for life by the notice taken of their movements, tones, sayings, which leads them to repeat what draws attention, and to act from love of observation, instead of following the impulses of nature. A child should never be tempted to put on pretty airs, or to think of itself and its looks. I have wished my children always to act in a free, natural, unstudied way, without the idea or desire of being observed, and, on this account, have been very willing to keep them out of society, where they might have been taught, by injudicious notice, to turn their thoughts upon themselves and to assume the manners which they would have seen to attract attention. The charm of infancy is its perfect artlessness and the immediate communication between its feelings and actions. I would prefer that my children should have any degree of awkwardness, rather than form an artificial style of conduct; for the first evil may be outgrown, but affectation is seldom or never cured.

"The next particular to be mentioned is closely connected with this. I wish my children to be honest, sincere, and undisguised, to tell the truth, at all perils and under all circumstances. I have always kept this in sight, endeavouring, in

my whole intercourse with them, to avoid the slightest appearance of art or disguise. Children must *never be deceived.* For example, in order to induce them to take medicine, they must never be told that it is less bitter than it is; nor, to keep them from crying, should things which they want be slily concealed from them. It is better to let them cry than to give them a lesson in manœuvring. I am persuaded that the artifices of children, which we charge on nature, are very often imitations of the cunning practices of those about them. I would have an intercourse of entire frankness established with children. They should never have reason to suspect that there is the least disagreement between our feelings and outward signs. If we are unwilling to disclose any thing, we should say so, and not use indirect means to hide it; and we should encourage them to the same explicitness. We should never invite them to express more affection than they really feel, or to lavish marks of fondness, when they wish to employ themselves about something else. It is better that they should *seem* cold than *be* insincere. Nor should they be taught, as a part of politeness, to use lightly the language of affection. Whenever they give their opinion, they should be encouraged to do it fully, freely, and not be tempted to soften or color it because it may happen to differ from our own or that of others. They should talk always from their own minds, and not from other people's. This transparency in children is undoubtedly sometimes unpleasant. Yet when connected, as it always should be, with the culture of the kind affections, it gradually ripens into an ingenuous, considerate frankness, which expresses the real convictions of the mind, without inflicting unnecessary pain, and becomes one of the chief beauties of our social nature.

"Children are taught insincerity in various ways; sometimes by example, sometimes by close questioning, and again by severity, by capriciousness in their superiors, by finding

that their honest confessions are punished, or, at least, expose them to wearisome advice," &c.

"*Florence*, Nov. 12, 1822. I told you how earnestly I desire that my children should be simple and unaffected in character and manners, and sincere, frank, and undisguised in language and conduct. I would now add, what it is hardly necessary to say to *you*, that I wish my children to be placed under circumstances and influences most favorable for forming that kind, affectionate, benevolent, disinterested character which our religion enjoins so continually and earnestly. Children should learn to love before they can understand the meaning of the word. They are put into our hands dependent, helpless, ignorant, — for this very end, that they may call forth love in our hearts, and that our love may awaken a corresponding sentiment in them. To nourish in them attachment and affectionate feelings should, in fact, be a leading object with us in supplying their wants, upholding their weakness, and relieving their pains.

"For this end, it is of great importance that our treatment of children should be marked by uniform kindness, unbroken by inequalities of temper. We have labored that our children should never see in us the looks, or hear from us the sounds, of passion. I am sure that the bad feelings of infancy, which we charge upon nature, are very often to be traced to the impatience, and want of self-government, and abuse of power, in older people; and I have a strong conviction, that an amiable, generous temper, uniformly expressed by those around them, will prove equally contagious.

"There is, however, a danger of a different kind to be guarded against. It is possible, by injudicious fondness, to nourish selfishness instead of love in our children. They may be so treated, as to imagine that all around them are living *chiefly* for their gratification, and to expect all to be sub-

servient to them, — a mode of treatment perhaps worse, even, than severity. To prevent this, they must see, that, whilst they are loved tenderly, they are not loved blindly and without judgment; and they must see, too, that others are loved as well as themselves, and that they are expected, as they have ability, to serve and benefit those around them. They should never imagine for a moment that their own happiness is more important than that of older persons, or their rights, interests, and feelings more sacred; but they should early learn the essential equality of human beings and the respect due to human nature in every condition. They must not acquire an idea of their own singular importance, by seeing that all arrangements refer to them, by great attention in company, or by being allowed to command others for services which they can render themselves; nor must self-will and an imperious temper be encouraged, by granting to their obstinate, importunate, loud demands what a wise affection would not yield to their first requests. Disinterestedness, forgetfulness of self, living for others, — this is a primary end in education.

"Yet too much is not to be expected at first. Children at first are selfish, — if so hard a word may be used, — by necessity, and innocently; for their own pleasures and pains are the only ones of which they have any notion. They very slowly learn that others feel as keenly as themselves. They must therefore gradually have their minds turned to others' feelings, and be taught to place themselves in others' situations. Their own sufferings, instead of calling forth in their attendants an excessive tenderness, which would only make them cowardly and effeminate, should be used to produce sympathy with others in the same circumstances. In like manner, their attention should be gradually turned to disinterested actions and generous sentiments in others, which they are capable of comprehending; and they should always hear these spoken of with unaffected delight.

Until, by such methods, a spirit of self-sacrifice is in some measure excited, children should not be urged to express it in action; nor should profession of it ever be required, lest their kindness become tainted with insincerity. I conclude, as I began, with saying that the best way of teaching children love is by example. Let them see that it is common for people to live for others rather than themselves, and then they will not think that disinterestedness is a superhuman effort.

"There is another subject, closely connected with this, on which I wish to add a few lines; I mean self-government. The hardest task for children, as for ourselves, is to govern the appetites, to restrain wishes, to give up what is pleasant; and this task is to be lightened by preserving them, as far as we can, from immoderate desires. Self-restraint, which is hard at first, becomes impossible, when the appetites are inflamed by studied indulgence, by a thousand delicacies and stimulants, &c. Those children are happiest, and best prepared for generous efforts, whose natural, simple wants are gratified by simple means, who are accustomed to plain food, and are left to find pleasure in the exercise of their own limbs and powers, instead of having their wishes anticipated and multiplied by misplaced kindness. Children are continually corrupted and enslaved to their appetites by bad example, by seeing older people giving great importance to pleasures of sense, and living to gratify factitious wants. In this way, they come to think a thousand superfluities essential; their wants become insatiable, and, instead of living for others, they are perpetually pursuing, with a feverish, irritable eagerness, unsubstantial pleasures for themselves."

Such was the watchful care with which he endeavoured to surround his little girl and boys with gentle and purifying influences. But one of them was never to learn on earth the riches of a parent's love. Almost while he was

writing the last lines, his youngest son had died. He received the intelligence of this calamity on his arrival at Rome, and nothing could have been more beautiful than his acquiescence in this irreparable loss. The same letters which conveyed the sad tidings announced also that a beloved sister-in-law had been taken away; and, in his reply, he thus touchingly speaks of the twofold bereavement: —

"*Rome*, Dec. 18, 1822. I reached this place yesterday, and found here the package of letters containing the melancholy accounts of W.'s loss and of my own. I am afflicted indeed. God has visited me with the heaviest loss I can experience, save one. My sweet, lovely boy! Is he indeed gone? and am I no more to see that smile which to me and to his mother was like a beam from heaven? He was a most gentle creature. I can remember his occasional cries of distress, but never one of passion. My health did not allow me to carry and play with him, as I had been in the habit of doing with my other infants; but when I was amusing myself with Mary and William, he would creep to me and climb up into my lap, and win from me, by his benignant smile, the notice which I was giving to them. The accounts we had received of him before this last sad news were most encouraging, and we were anticipating the happy moment when we should take him to our arms and press him to our hearts with a delight he had never given us before. And he is gone! and when we return, if that blessing is in store for us, we shall look for him in vain! O, the void in a parent's heart, when a child is taken, you do not know! and may you never know it! You are a mother; and, to a mother, the pang is what a father seldom feels. I think much more of my wife than of myself; her feelings on the subject of our children have been so keen. . . . . .

"Do not think, my dear, from what I have written, that I

am in danger of dejection. I suffer; but I have never forgotten that my child belonged to another and better parent, and was made for a higher state than this. I am sure that he was equally the care of God in death as in life. I cannot believe that the necessary means of educating an immortal spirit are confined to this world. I remember that comforting scripture, 'Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven'; and my hope is, that my child has gone to live under a more intimate connection than we can now conceive with Him who took little children into his arms and blessed them. Nor do I believe that the relation of parent and child is dissolved by death. In the whole progress of our future being, we must always, I think, look back with peculiar interest on the moment when we *began* to be, and must, I think, distinguish with some peculiar emotion those who, under Providence, brought us into life, and who welcomed and loved and cherished us in our first helplessness with intense and unwearied affection. Death is not that wide gulf between us and the departed which we are apt to imagine..... Francis, Ann, my child, and our beloved Barbara, are gone from us, but are not lost to us.

"At the mention of Barbara's name, I feel as if I had been unjust in dwelling so long on my more immediate affliction. I know no greater bereavement than W.'s. I would speak of my own loss in Barbara's death, but that his so much surpasses it. She was one of the loveliest of women and best of wives. All the graces and virtues were joined in her so harmoniously, her excellence was so singularly unalloyed, so far from the mixtures and defects which we have to lament in most of our friends, that I dwell on her with a peculiar complacency. Seldom does a gentler, purer, more benignant, more disinterested spirit take its flight from earth to heaven. Her countenance, conversation, life, sent forth a sweet and blessed influence. And she too is gone, and I am to see this lovely and beloved sister no more on earth!"

And again, to his mother he thus writes, under date of January 2d, 1823 : —

" Of our dear boy we had heard nothing but good, and his loss was a blow as unexpected as it was heavy. He was a treasure worth more to us than the world. His sweet, gentle temper not only made him a present blessing, but encouraged us to hope that he would need only the mildest influences to sway him to goodness, and that he would make us the happiest returns of love for our parental care. To part with this lovely, smiling, innocent boy, to whom we hoped to do so much good, and whose attachment and progress we imagined were to brighten our future lives, this is indeed to be bereaved. . . . . .

" —— expressed a fear that I should suffer in health by the sad news from home. No! Even had I not the supports of Christian principle, I should find motives enough in my situation and affections for watching over my health. I feel my distance from home more deeply than ever, and have hardly a thought or a wish, as regards this world, but of returning to it; and knowing, as I do, that this depends on recovering my strength, I am almost too solicitous in using the means to this end. . . . . It is true that all the symptoms of my old maladies have not disappeared, nor will they, I apprehend, for a long time, if ever. But I trust that a life of moderate effort in my profession, together with regular exercise, will not only preserve, but gradually augment, my strength; and this hope gives me a cheerfulness and gratitude very necessary in my present circumstances. . . . . .

" You and my mother Gibbs have suffered much by our late domestic trials. Our absence seems to us a great evil, by depriving us of the opportunities of rendering those offices of filial love of which we never knew the full value until we were parents ourselves. It is our constant prayer,

that God would preserve you both, and would increase our power of contributing to your happiness. Absence has endeared all our friends to us, but none more than our parents. I sometimes wonder, now, that we were capable of tearing ourselves from you all. In a world so transient and uncertain, a year seems too much time to be spent at a distance from one's home. Do give the assurances of my love to all our dear circle. I cannot begin to name the friends to whom I wish to send affectionate remembrance. I am too rich in these blessings to be able to count them, and distance only makes them more precious.

"Your affectionate son."

And, finally, in his journals, he thus communes with his own spirit and with God : —

"*Rome*, Jan. 1823. How unavailing is foresight in the most important transactions of life! We would lengthen life for our children, and they are taken before us. We lay deep plans of future usefulness, and, whilst gathering the means, we lose the beings on and for whom we would expend them. We waste the present for a future which never comes. We go to foreign countries for health, and there perhaps lay our bones, or hear of the death of those with whom we were to enjoy the health we seek. Let us not be too wise and provident, but use the means of happiness and usefulness God gives, instead of throwing them away in the pursuit of more. Exile from home, from the sphere of action marked out for us by God, is one of the greatest evils of life, and should not be encountered lightly.

"In the moment of affliction the thought sometimes comes to us with an almost overwhelming vividness of our *entire* dependence. The hour which has taken one blessing can take more. All our possessions begin to tremble, when one very dear is taken. The loss of one child makes prominent the frailty of all. The bloom of health fades as we look

upon it. O, how desolate we may be made in a moment! and how wretched would be our condition, if the Power which disposes of us were not benevolent!

"When I think of my child, of its beauty and sweetness, of the tenderness he awakened, of the spirit which God had breathed into him, and which had begun to develop itself, I cannot doubt that he was the care of God in death, as in life. He was made for God; had he lived, my chief duty would have been to direct him to that Infinite Good, — and has he not now gone to Him from whom he came? Is it not a most interesting view of death, that it removes in a great degree the intermediate provisions, the external means by which God communicates benefits, and thus places us in a more immediate and visible connection with him? Is it not the happiness of heaven, that spirits see God not only as reflected in his works, but face to face? God used *our* arms to sustain our child; has he not taken him to a world where he will lean more immediately on *his own*?

"When I consider how interesting a moment the beginning of existence is to a reasonable being, how infinite the abyss between non-existence and existence, I feel that we must always look back to the moment and circumstances of our birth with peculiar emotions, and that the beings to whom, under God, we owed our life, who were the instruments of Providence in giving us bodily existence and watching over the feeble spark, who were the first to welcome and to love us, must always seem to be among our chief benefactors. Will not the parental relation thus be a bond of union, a source of happiness, for ever? The foundling sighs to know his parents with eager and burning desire. Is not this filial affection an instinct of the rational and moral nature which will act through all the future?

"Our child is lost to our sight, but not to our faith and hope, — perhaps not to our beneficent influence. Is there no means of gratifying our desire of promoting his hap-

piness? The living and dead make one communion. 'Why born only to die?' Birth establishes a connection with the human race. His birth made our boy one of a great spiritual family, and intimately united him with a few. Will not his eternal being be influenced by this connection?

"We were not permitted to render the last kindnesses! There is, too, a pleasure, if it may be so called, in seeing the gradual decay and extinction of life; for we seem more easily to follow the spirit into another state, by thus bearing it company to the verge of this. There is not that sense of darkness in the gradual fading of the light as in its immediate extinction."

"Is it true, that the suggestions of affliction, the views which seem to open on the distressed spirit, are fallacious, the offspring of a diseased mind? When is the mind most diseased? In the intoxication of prosperity, or the solemn hour of adversity? When does the soul enter most deeply into itself? — when understand its true end and happiness? — when send forth the purest, highest desires? The false splendors of this world hide the glories of a better. The light from above is seen first, perhaps, when that below grows dim.....

"The loss of a child is, indeed, one of the greatest which a mortal can experience, — the loss of an object of such tender love, of a being possessing the noblest powers which we had hoped to see unfolding beneath our care, to whom we had longed to do more good than to any other being, and from whom we had anticipated receiving the most consoling and rejoicing returns of love. Surely the affections excited by the parental relation bear a resemblance to those by which God is united to his creatures."

How much the vivid sense of his own loss, and the depth of love thus opened in his heart towards his children, added warmth to the reverent gratitude by which

he was bound to his mother, appears by the following letter.

" *Florence*, April 7, 1823. When you look at the date of my letter, you will see that I am writing you on my *birthday;* and, on this day, to whom could I write with so much reason as to you? — for to you, as well as to me, it is a memorable period. · When I think of the beginning of my existence, how natural is it that my thoughts should turn to one whose kindness towards me then commenced, and who has given me through my whole life proofs of increasing love! I can hardly suppress my tears, as I feel the tender relation which my birth established between us; and now that I am so far from you, while I remember your declining years, it is consoling to me to reflect, that, amidst many deficiencies, I have not proved wholly insensible to the claims of your affection.

" On this day, I feel that I have cause to give God thanks for the blessing of existence. My life, though no exception to the common lot, though checkered with good and evil, has, on the whole, been singularly favored. Without any care or forethought of my own, my outward condition has been almost too favorable, and the comforts of life have been multiplied upon me, not only beyond my hopes, but beyond my wishes. As to those best blessings of this world, *friends* worthy of love, I know not who has been richer than I; and as to the chief crowning good, not only of this, but of the life to come, I mean *religion*, I seem to myself to have been placed in circumstances highly favorable, at least, to the understanding of the Christian faith in its greatest purity. How far I have practised it, with what feelings I review my conduct, and the progress of my character, — these are topics on which silence is wisdom. To another Being I have to render my account; and our poor, weak, sinful nature can hardly look back on a life as long as my

own without emotions which can be fitly uttered to Him alone."

The wanderer's face was now turned again to his native land. He had faithfully sought renewed health by rest and travel amidst interesting scenes; he had enjoyed and learned as much of good as, in his bodily and mental condition, he was capable of receiving; and now he was free to return; and he thus alludes to the deep satisfaction with which he looked forward to a reunion with his friends: —

"Need I say with what pleasure I write to you from this place? Florence is on my way *home*, and though I am still very, very far from you, the thought of making some progress towards you is an inexpressible consolation. . . . . Return seems almost too great a happiness to be anticipated. . . . . .

"I have said nothing of the feelings with which I turn towards home. My heart swells within me, as I approach this subject. And why should I speak of it? Need I say where my affections cling? — how my heart yearns for the native land I have left? — how you are remembered in my prayers by night and by day? O, no! My dear mother, once more, farewell! May your life and health be spared! May we meet again!"

On the last day of his voyage to America, he made these entries in his journal: —

"I have just seen *land*. Blessed be God! In a few hours I hope to meet my friends. What thanks are due! Let me now, on approaching shore, humbly purpose in God's strength, that I will strive to do his will more perseveringly, to be more useful, watchful, temperate, kind, devout, than ever before."

"I am returned to my friends; let me be more to them than I have yet been, more attentive, thoughtful, social, seeking their cheerfulness, interesting myself in their concerns. Especially let me be more to my mother."

The following letter to a sister will best show his feelings after his return: —

"My dear L.: — How happy I am to write to you again from my beloved home! Join with me in gratitude to our merciful Father, who has guarded me and our dear R—— by sea and land, and brought us back to you all. We did, indeed, see and feel, on our return, that we had been visited by an irreparable calamity, and for a moment our loss almost made us forget the blessings which are spared to us. But I am now awake as I never was before to their number and value. My happiness has been almost overpowering, too great to endure in a world made up of changes, and too great, I know, for the purposes of Providence towards me. My health is very much improved; and the voyage from which I anticipated the prostration of my whole system proved very beneficial. Among my many blessings was the good account I received of you and yours."

And on the Sunday after his arrival, he thus poured out the fulness of his heart: —

"Those of you, my hearers, who have travelled abroad, and left far behind, and for a long time, home, friends, familiar haunts, spheres of usefulness, and employments congenial to your tastes, — you can understand the fervent gratitude which glows in my heart to-day. True, the moment of return to one's native land does not bring unmixed happiness; for too often we reënter our long-forsaken dwellings only to miss cherished objects of affection, to see the hand of time pressing heavily on our earliest, oldest friends,

to receive sad answers respecting acquaintances, to revive griefs in those who have been called to mourn in our absence, and thus to have the solemn lesson of life's changes brought with new power to our minds. Still, the moment of return after a long and distant separation is, though not without tears, most blessed. To set foot once again on our native shore, where we grew up, and where our best affections have taken root, — to reënter the abodes where the tenderest ties were formed, and have gathered strength, — to feel ourselves once more at home, that spot over which the heart throws a light such as shines nowhere else upon earth, — to see again the countenances of friends whose forms have gone with us in memory through distant regions, — to feel the embrace of those arms on which we have leaned in our past hours of sorrow and pleasure, — to read in the eyes of those around us a love which no kindness of strangers can ever express, — to exchange the constraints, reserves, suspicions, which can hardly be shaken off in foreign lands, for the sweet confidence, the free and full communion, the opening of the heart, which belong to domestic life, — to know that the lives for which we have trembled, the beings in whose existence our chief earthly happiness is centred, are safe, — O, this is joy! joy such as blooms rarely in this imperfect state. To this hour of return my mind has pressed forward ever since I left you. Amid the new and glorious scenes through which God has led me, amid matchless beauties of nature and wonders of art, my own dear country has risen before me with undiminished interest and brightness. And invisible ties have reached across the ocean, growing stronger by distance, and welcoming me back to the loves, the friendships, the joys, the duties, the opportunities of home."

# MEMOIR.

## PART THIRD.

# PART THIRD.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE MINISTRY AND LITERATURE.

It was in August, 1823, that Dr. Channing * had the joy of once more standing amid the circle of loving friends, parishioners, acquaintances, who waited to welcome him. For a short season he retired into the country, and then recommenced his public labors with a freshness and fervor that showed the new spiritual energy with which he was consciously quickened. Among the animating scenes presented by Europe, so various and rich in suggestion, and especially in the long night-watches and perfect repose of his homeward voyage, during which he experienced an unwonted exaltation and transparency of mind, he had found leisure to review the past, to cast off many shackles of custom and prejudice, to learn distinctly his own function, to comprehend the spirit and tendencies of modern society, and, above all, to commune more nearly than ever before with God.

* He had received the title of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard University in 1820.

This year of absence had been, unawares to himself, perhaps, a transition-period. Thenceforward was to open a new era of life, — an era freer and brighter, more buoyant in hope, more large in love, than even his enthusiastic youth at Richmond, and far more beautiful in its serene confidence, its tempered wisdom, its all-pervading holiness and humanity. The thick-clustered blossoms of his early aspiration had given a promise, truly kept, of branches bending to the ground beneath the mellow fruit of ripened goodness.

We are now to trace the widening influence of Dr. Channing's later life; and there is no better way of forming a true conception of the diffusive sympathy, the careful and capacious thought, the ready and exuberant, yet calm and equable, energy which characterized it, than to follow him in turn through each of the great spheres of interest in which he was called to act. Commencing, then, with his more special function as a preacher and a writer, we will contemplate his course progressively in relation to social reform, to the anti-slavery movements, and to politics; we will then regard him as a friend among his friends; and, finally, look in upon the quiet beauty of his daily life, in the Boston and Newport home, which he had reëntered, as we have seen, with such overflowing affection.

His first address to his people, after his return from Europe, will exhibit the high and solemn views which he cherished in relation to the ministry.

*August*, 1823. "Through the mercy of our Heavenly Father, I am allowed once again to address you; and let me open this new period of my ministerial life by paying my *tribute* of gratitude to Him in whom all our works should

begin and end. To God, my creator and preserver, my guide through the pathless seas, my friend among strangers, my guardian in peril, my strength in sickness, who has permitted me to see his glorious works, and has brought me back in safety to a beloved home, — to God, who has chastened and comforted me, who has spoken peace to my wounded spirit, and has spared to me so many friends, — to God, who has heard my prayers, who has placed me once more in the midst of an affectionate people, and restored me to the church which he has intrusted to my care, — to God, whose undeserved, unwearied, unfailing goodness passeth all understanding, whose love is the sweetness of all blessings, whose providence is our continual stay, whose grace is our unfailing hope, — I would make the only return which a creature can render, by bearing witness to his goodness, and giving myself up to his service with joyful, trustful, thankful, perfect devotion.

"In this house consecrated to his honor, in the presence of his people, I now renew the dedication of myself to God, of my whole being, life, thought, powers, faculties, affections, influence, of all which he has given and upholds. Let these lips speak his praise, this heart glow with his love, this strength be spent in doing his will! May I serve him better than I have done, with purer aims, with simpler purposes, with a soul more penetrated by his perfection, and with success worthy of his cause! I know my infirmity, and cannot forget the lifeless services which have too frequently been offered by me. But I would hope that the recent ordinations of his providence, that the lessons of dependence which have been learned in sickness and affliction, and that his preserving and restoring goodness, will produce some better fruit than a transient sensibility, will issue in a profound, tender sense of obligation, and in a firm purpose of duty. We know that one great end of the mysterious mixture of evil and good in our present lot is, to draw us to

God, to break our spiritual slumber, to soften our obduracy, and to change, through the blended influences of penitence and thankfulness, of sorrow and joy, our faint convictions into powerful principles. My friends, join with me in prayer to God, that to all his other gifts he will add the highest gift of his holy spirit, — so that, strengthened to resist the selfish propensities which enslave the bad, and make good men groan, I may show forth in my whole life a fervent spirit, and thus communicate awakening influences to my people. For it is not as a private individual, and not to relieve a burdened heart, that I speak here so largely of God's goodness. Were I alone concerned, I should not thus lay open my soul. But, conscious that my chief work in life is to act upon other minds, and to act through sympathy as well as instruction, I feel that you have an interest in the utterance and in the increase of my devout affections. God grant, for your sake, as well as my own, that they may be living and growing! . . . . .

"On this occasion, you will not expect from me a review of what I have seen and heard during my absence; but this I will say, that I have discovered nothing to obscure the claims of Christianity. I have learned no name mightier than that of Jesus, have found no new system of religion, no new institution for improving the character, no new method of salvation, among the schools of philosophy or the establishments of policy, to shake my persuasion of the paramount excellence of the gospel. On this point I return unchanged, unless to be more deeply convinced of the unspeakable worth of our religion be a change. I have seen human nature in new circumstances, but everywhere the same in its essential principles, and everywhere needing the same encouragements, consolations, inspiring and redeeming influences. Whilst, on other subjects, early impressions were corrected or effaced, I never for a moment have suspected *that Christianity* was an hereditary, local prejudice, — never

have found that it was passing out of sight in proportion as I changed the sky under which I was born. Like the sun, I have seen it shining above all lands, undiminished in brightness, and everywhere it has beamed forth as the true, the only light of the world. . . . . .

"I return with views of society which make me rejoice as I never did before in the promise held out by revealed religion of *a moral renovation* of the world. I expect less and less from revolutions, political changes, violent struggles, — from public men or public measures, — in a word, from any outward modification of society. Corrupt institutions will be succeeded by others equally, if not more, corrupt, whilst the root or principle lives in the heart of individuals and nations; and the only remedy is to be found in a moral change, to which Christianity, and the Divine power that accompanies it, are alone adequate. The voice of prophecy, announcing a purer, happier state of the world, under the holy and peaceful influences of Jesus, never sounded on my ear so sweetly, never breathed so cheering a power, as after a larger observation of mankind; and I turn to it, from the boasts of reformers, as to the authentic annunciation of a brighter day for humanity. . . . . .

"I return, my friends, as I hope, with an increased sense of the weight and worth of my office. I am not merely using what may be called the language of my profession, but I speak from deepest conviction, in pronouncing the duties of the Christian ministry to be the most important which can be imposed on human beings. And in saying this, I am far from setting up any exclusive pretensions, for in these duties *all men* share. *All* are called, in their various relations, and according to their power, to advance the cause of pure religion and of divine morality, to which the ministry is dedicated; and the function of the minister differs only in this, that he is appointed to give a more immediate, concentrated care to this primary interest of mankind.

The ministry has grown more grand and solemn, in my estimation, because I have a growing persuasion of the excellence of the religion to whose service it is devoted, and a growing conviction that on the ministry chiefly depends this cause of God. Whilst other means of advancing it are essential and efficient, still, the views of Christianity which prevail in a community, the form in which it is embraced, the influences it exerts on private character and happiness, on domestic life, on public opinion, on social institutions, depend upon nothing so much as the spirit, example, doctrine, zeal, fidelity of ministers. Man is used by God as his mightiest agent in operating on man. I feel that it is no ordinary work to which I am called, and that it were better never to have returned to it than to bring a cold and divided mind."

The very earnest feeling of responsibility and privilege, with which he renewed his ministerial labors, yet more plainly appears in the two following extracts from his letters of that period : —

" *Boston*, Sept. 22, 1823. I rejoice to tell you, and I do it with lively gratitude to God, that I bore the exertions of yesterday very, very well. I took the whole morning services, was as long as usual, gave some freedom to my feelings, and spoke, though not loudly, yet with excitement. I was wearied, but not exhausted, and by silence and abstinence kept off feverishness. This morning I am as well as usual. I cannot easily make even you feel what a relief this success has given me. I will not say that the happiness of my life depends on my ability to perform pastoral duty, for I hope I should feel and enjoy God's goodness in any situation; but the Christian ministry, with all its trials, and they are not small, is the work on which my heart is set, and my spirit almost faints at the thought of resigning it."

"*October* 27, 1823. I know that it will make you happy to hear that I have borne my return to my duties far better than I anticipated. I have, perhaps, been imprudent, and preached even longer and more earnestly than formerly; but, although I have suffered a little, I have received no serious injury. For this my heart overflows with gratitude. I sometimes think myself happier than I ever have been before. To meet my family once more was an inexpressible good, — so great, that I hardly dared to anticipate it when abroad. But the privilege of preaching again that gospel which my sufferings have made more dear to me, and the hope that I may be allowed to continue to preach it, and may labor with more singleness of mind, fervency, devotion, and success, — this completes my joy.

"I have returned to my duties with an interest which, perhaps, nothing but long inability to perform them and many trials could have awakened. And thus, my dear, we are often able to see that it is good for us to have been afflicted. The inward process, which goes on amidst sufferings, often explains God's discipline, and we learn to bless the hand which chastens, for we see that it is stretched out in parental wisdom and mercy. I do not mean that I have derived great improvement from affliction, for I am aware that the satisfaction I find in returning to long-suspended duties is to be accounted for by natural as well as religious principles. But be the cause what it may, the effect is a good, and will, I trust, give greater power to my ministry. I have talked of myself; for your love, I know, gives you an interest in the subject."

In order to show more fully his views of the profession which he so unfeignedly thought to be the highest office in modern society, far transcending, in the depth and extent of its influence, the sphere of the statesman or of the literary man, we will proceed to give some further extracts

from his sermons; and, in doing so, shall avail ourselves of addresses which he made to his people annually, on the occasion of his return from Rhode Island, at which beautiful retreat he began regularly to pass the summer months during this period of his life. In these discourses, he endeavoured to break through the precise and ceremonious style of preaching, which is usually thought necessary to preserve the decorum of the pulpit, and to speak in the more direct and simple language which friend uses to friend. These sermons are thus, to a great degree, autobiographical.

### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTER.

1828. "In describing the ministry as a highly responsible office, I beg not to be misunderstood. I sometimes hear language employed on this point, which offends me by its extravagance, and which can do only harm to the teacher and the taught. The minister is sometimes spoken of as if on him depended the salvation of his people, — as if to him it belonged to decide the eternal condition of his congregation, — as if by his neglect his hearers would be plunged into irremediable woe. I certainly do not feel as if any such tremendous power were in my hands. I would not wield it for the universe. I assume no such trust. I, indeed, offer myself to you as your spiritual friend and teacher; but I do it in the full knowledge that God has given you better aids than your minister, that I am but one out of many means of your instruction, and that, after all, the chief responsibility falls upon *yourselves*. Regard the ministry as important to you, — I will add, as essential to the Christian cause, — but do not lay upon it a burden which no conscientious or benevolent man for worlds would sustain.

"The minister is not alone intrusted with the salvation of the human race. True, the gospel is committed to him;

but not to him only, nor to him chiefly. It is intrusted to *all* who receive it, for the benefit of their fellow-creatures. It is committed especially to the parent for the child, — to the private Christian for his family and friends, — to the Sunday-school teacher for the young, — to the more enlightened for the less privileged classes of society. The minister alone is not to preach the religion. It is to be preached in the nursery, in the household, in the place of business, in friendly intercourse, in public assemblies, as truly as in the pulpit; and we cannot doubt that often Christian truth is more effectually carried to the conscience and the understanding by the casual teaching of every day than by more regular and stated ministrations."

EACH SOUL MUST SAVE ITSELF.

1827. "The great work is to be done by the soul itself. I cannot, by preaching, even were I to speak with the tongues of angels, make one of you a Christian; nor, were I able, ought I to attempt such a work. You are to be made Christians by your own faithful use of all the means of religious improvement. Could I, my friends, by a word change your minds, expel all error from your understandings, subdue your passions, take from the irritable man every impulse of anger, from the worldly man every thought of accumulation, from the proud man every stirring of self-elation, I should undoubtedly deliver you from sources of trouble; but your deliverance, thus passively acquired, would have no more virtue than would belong to you, were death, by extinguishing all consciousness, by striking you from existence, to work the same deliverance. Nothing is morally good in man but what he is active in producing, but what is the growth of his own free agency. Were I, by an irresistible influence, to implant in you a right faith and kind affections, I should not aid, but injure you, by taking from you the opportunities of virtue. You would come from my hand well-proportioned

machines; but machines you still would be. The glory of a free agent would be gone. I come not to exert such a sway, not to rule your minds or your hearts, but to urge you to establish within yourselves the sovereignty of reason and conscience by your own reverential culture of these high principles of your nature."

### TRUE ELOQUENCE.

1827. "To rule over passive minds, to dictate to those who will not inquire and judge, seems to me a low ambition, a poor dominion. But the power of convincing, persuading, improving free and active and self-relying minds is a noble endowment. This is the only power over men which I covet. So desirous am I to dissuade you from putting yourselves passively into other men's hands, that I would advise you to distrust much of what is called eloquence in the pulpit. There is a true eloquence, which you cannot too much honor, and it is characterized chiefly by this mark: *it calls into vigorous exercise both the understanding and the heart of the hearer.* It has no design upon men's minds, does not desire to bear them away as by a torrent, does not hurry them to rash conclusions, does not appeal to prejudices, but treats the understanding fairly, generously, invites it to weigh proofs, and aims to inspire it with a supreme love of *truth.* This is the highest characteristic of genuine eloquence, that it gives tone and energy to the hearer's mind, gives him a consciousness of his own powers, and enables him to act from his own will and from his own judgment. Against such eloquence, of course, I would not warn you. But there is another kind, and one far more commonly met with, — because requiring little talent and no elevation of soul, — which deals chiefly with men's fears, which palsies and enslaves the intellect, which makes the hearer distrustful of his own faculties, which overwhelms him with appalling images, and brings him into dependence upon the speaker. This, I have said, requires

little talent; though, in the present state of society, it exerts great sway. A man of common sagacity may blindfold and lead behind him his fellow-creatures. A much higher and nobler skill is required to heal and strengthen men's intellectual sight, and to open before them large and glorious prospects."

### THE END OF THE MINISTRY.

1830. "I have been called to aid you in that inward work on which the happiness of your present and future being depends, — the work of subduing evil, sin, the power of temptation, and of strengthening and building up in yourselves Christian faith and virtue. It has been my duty to urge on you the need of *continual improvement in character*, as the only thing worth living for, — without which life would be worse than lost. I have aimed, you will bear me witness, to excite you to the most earnest culture of your own minds, as that without which nothing uttered here, and nothing befalling you in God's providence, would do you good. I have aimed to raise your thoughts to that perfection, that dignity, that likeness to God, that height of virtue and happiness, to which Jesus Christ came to exalt us, and to which we may all rise by fidelity to his religion. And I have exhibited to you the depth of guilt, shame, and misery, into which, by self-neglect, by abandoning ourselves to low and evil passions, we may all be plunged. It has been my aim to win you to an unreserved devotedness to God, — to set before you such views of the Infinite Being, in his character, designs, and modes of action, as were suited to attract to him the whole strength of your love and trust and obedience. In a word, it has been my office to dispense to you the religion of Jesus Christ. I have especially sought to teach you the great, I may say the single, purpose of this religion, which is to form you after the spirit and likeness of its Divine Author, and thus to give you the first fruits of

heaven while you live on earth, as well as to prepare you for that perfect and immortal state.

"Such has been my work. Its greatness fills my mind, the more I contemplate it. Time, which shows us the emptiness of most earthly pursuits, only magnifies, in my regard, this glorious office. On what sublime and heart-thrilling themes have I been called, been permitted, to speak! It seems to me, that, through the universe, no words of more solemn import than GOD, IMMORTALITY, PERFECTION, can be uttered, — that no higher themes can absorb the most exalted intelligences through eternity."

HIS OWN AIMS.

1830. "That I have performed this work imperfectly, I feel. No one can be more penetrated with a sense of my deficiencies than myself; and my consciousness of these increases, because the religion which I am called to preach continually rises before me in greater beauty and dignity, with surer promises of happiness, more widely reaching claims, more animating motives, and more solemn sanctions. Still, my heart bears me witness that I have sincerely labored to carry home to the souls of my fellow-beings the divine truth which I have been privileged to impart. This truth has been my meditation and study by night and by day. I have given to it the strength of my body and mind. It has absorbed me, almost consumed me. Every new or brighter view of it has seemed to me a recompense and happiness which I would not have exchanged for any outward good. The hope of doing something to rescue this divine religion from the corruptions which so mournfully disfigure and darken it, — the hope of bringing out more clearly some of its divine features, and thus of contributing to extend and establish its empire on the earth, has been the dearest, the most cherished hope of my life. So far, I trust, I have been loyal to the cause of my Master. Whether I have not con-

fined myself too exclusively to this intellectual labor, whether I have not spent my strength too much in solitary reflection, whether a more active life and more frequent intercourse with my hearers might not have been more useful, — these are questions which I cannot determine. I may have erred; some, perhaps, may think I have. I may have been self-indulgent, in the path I have taken, and you might have been more aided by services which I have withheld. I am not anxious to justify myself. I pray God that my error — if it has been one —may be forgiven, and that his providence may avert from you the evils of my want of wisdom or fidelity."

An appreciating reader of the foregoing extracts will be conscious of a gradual change of tone in Dr. Channing's mode of address, — a change more readily felt than characterized, — but which, by way of suggestion, we will denote by saying that it was constantly becoming less ministerial and more manly. He more and more regarded the religious teacher as the ideal of what all men should be, an inspirer of life. Universal sanctification of the whole character and conduct was the end which he aimed to present vividly to his hearers, as the only true object for a human being's aspiration. And force of good-will — not sentimentality, not imaginative enthusiasm, not merely kindly affectionateness, but a brave, hopeful, conscientious, confiding love — was the spirit which flowed out from him in every word and look. This expansive feeling in relation to the animating influence which a religious teacher should exert appears very fully in his letters.

"*Newport*, Aug. 28, 1828. I consider my profession as almost infinitely raised above all others, when its true nature is understood, and its true spirit imbibed. But as it is too often viewed and followed, it seems to me of little worth

to him who exercises it, or to those on whom it ought to act. It requires moral elevation of sentiment, that the purposes of Christianity may be understood, and moral energy, a spirit of self-sacrifice, that those purposes may be pursued with resolution and power. I do not mean that a young man is to possess these requisites in a great degree, at first, — but he must have the seeds, and give some promise of them. To one who has this generous style of character, this capacity of devotedness and disinterestedness, I consider my calling as leaving all others very, very far behind. But when taken up for its respectability, for reputation, for a support, and followed mechanically, drudgingly, with little or no heartiness and devotion, or when seized upon fanatically and with a blind and bigoted zeal, I think as poorly of it as men of the world do, who, I grieve to say, have had too much reason for setting us ministers down among the drones of the hive of society."

"*Portsmouth*, July 7, 1828.* In our profession, as in every other, success depends chiefly on the heartiness with which a man enters into it. He must throw his soul into his work. I am the more encouraged about your success, from the proof you have given of zeal in a good cause. You think nobly of the object to which you are about to devote yourself, and this is no small part of a minister's preparation. You may meet, at the outset, some disheartening circumstances. I suspect most ministers can tell you of their hours of despondency, especially at the beginning of their course. But true courage fights the enemy *within*, as well as abroad; and I shall be disappointed indeed, if you are wanting in this generous virtue. Your friend and brother."

"*Portsmouth, Rhode Island*, June 18, 1828. † The people here want to be awakened, certainly; but they have

* To Dr. Charles Follen. † To Orville Dewey, D. D.

passed through the ordinary process of revivals without much apparent benefit. I feel, more and more, that the people at large need to be protected against these modes of assault, by having some more distinct and thorough notions presented to them of what religion or virtue is than, perhaps, any of us have yet given. The identity of religion and universal goodness is what they have hardly dreamed of. You have expressed some of the best views on the subject which I have heard; and, if your intellect *will* work, in spite of your plans of repose, perhaps it could not find a more useful topic.

"My mind turns much on the general question, What can be done for the scattering of the present darkness? I think I see, more and more, that the ministry, as at present exercised, though, on the whole, a good, is sadly defective. What would be the result of a superior man, not of the clergy, giving a course of lectures on the *teaching* of *Jesus*, just as he would give one on the philosophy of Socrates or Plato? Cannot this subject be taken out of the hands of ministers? Cannot the higher minds be made to feel that Christianity belongs to them as truly as to the priest, and that they disgrace and degrade themselves by getting their ideas of it from 'our order' so exclusively? Cannot learned men come to Christianity, just as to any other system, for the purpose of ascertaining what it is?"

"*Dec.* 9, 1829.* Is the time never coming, when Christians will be less dependent on *ministers* than they now are? I feel deeply the defects of the present organization of the Christian church. 'Every joint of the body should work effectually' for the common growth; and now a few men have a monopoly of the work."

"*Feb.* 22, 1840. The ministry need not continue what it has been, and the time is coming when it will be found to be

* To Joseph Tuckerman, D. D.

the most effectual mode of getting near to our fellow-creatures. It demands great energy of thought and purpose; and when so followed, promises unspeakable good."

"*Newport, Rhode Island*, Sept. 5, 1837.* One of the discouraging symptoms of the day is, that so few persons, except of the clerical profession, make morals and religion the subject of investigation and serious inquiry. To most, religion is a tradition or a feeling. The noblest subjects of human thought, and those in which all men have an equal interest, are given up to a small body of professional men. The effects of this making theology a monopoly of a few are disastrous alike to the many and the few. Theology has become technical, a trade, a means of power. It has taken a monastic character, been severed from common life, and thus been turned into an instrument of superstition. The multitude, in their ignorance, have easily fallen under the dominion of fear, and have bowed their understandings to irrational and degrading doctrines. It always cheers me, when I find a man, not of my profession, who understands the dignity of moral and religious truth, and seeks it as inestimably precious. These remarks will explain the pleasure your letter gave me. So far from feeling that you used an undue freedom in your suggestions, I was truly grateful for them. We ministers need the freest communication with our intelligent brethren of the *laity*. I use this word for want of a better, though I dislike it. They often understand the moral wants of the community better than we can. They know, as we cannot, when we beat the air or waste our strength on unimportant matters, and where the main obstacles to human improvement lie. What volume could be laid open to a minister so useful as the secret conviction of his thinking hearers, in regard to the character and effects of his labors?

* To Wm. Plumer, Jun., Esq., Epping, New Hampshire.

For want of such communication, we work much in the dark."

"1840. That the people are in a condition to be raised, impelled, by the word of life from the pulpit and in conversation, I have strong reason to believe. The way is preparing, the mountains are sinking, the rough places becoming plain, and the great salvation, the true redemption, which Christianity is to effect, is to be revealed more distinctly than in the past. But great obstructions are still to be removed; and this is no painful thought to those who believe that obstructions are intended to call forth holy energy, and that they will yield to the sufferings and toils of faith and love. Some will call me a safe prophet, when I say that I have little hope of living to see what I predict."

"1840.* We agreed on most points, except the ministry, which he thinks should not form a profession, but be exercised by the *spiritual* who are engaged in common affairs. His means of observation have been wider than mine, and his statement of the evils attending our common arrangement was stronger than I have heard. I am satisfied, however, that, under our present social state, we cannot reconcile with a common calling the culture needed to religious teaching. If our 'communities' prosper, the difficulties may cease. Men may then support themselves and still be ministers, and I shall rejoice in the change. It is wrong to charge on our ministers alone many of the evils attending our present church system. The false and unreasonable expectations of the people, wrong notions of the relation between them and the teachers, the hope of performing by proxy what the soul can alone perform for itself, the love of excitement rather than of spiritual progress, — these defects of the hear-

* To Mrs. E. L. Follen.

ers make our office a very trying and tempting one. Happily, the perception of evils is a step towards their removal."

The dislike of spiritual dictatorship, sanctimonious dignity, and pompous arrogance, which appears more or less through these papers, was exceedingly strong in Dr. Channing. The designation of 'Reverend,' even, was most disagreeable to him. He had no taste for being set up as a saint or an oracle, and wished no influence but that which arose from perfect naturalness. He thought it was time for much of the superstitious homage to the clergy to vanish. As appears from the last letter, indeed, his only reason for wishing the ministry to be preserved as a distinct function in society was his belief that, amidst the anxieties incident to existing social relations, only the very strong could keep their spirits free, only the very tall in moral stature so raise their heads above the dust of the caravan as to see the horizon and the heavens and the direction of the march.

But the very motive which prompted Dr. Channing's desire to see the artificial eminence broken down on which fear and policy have isolated the clergy, and the props of conventional decencies swept away by which even the stupid and selfish feel themselves upheld in a position of power, and to have every minister left to stand firm or to fall, according to his manhood, was an ever-deepening reverence for the function of the prophet, — the real communicator of spiritual light. Amidst crowds of business-men, energetically turning the vast resources of modern science to the increase and accumulation of wealth, — amidst struggling political parties, made restless by the spirit of liberty and the half-recognized rights of all men, rights possessed so partially

even by the privileged, — amidst the growing multitude of teachers, literary, scientific, philosophical, plying the countless means of diffusing intelligence, — he longed to see a body of men step forward, fitted by the universality at once and the unity of their aim, their elevation above selfish meanness, their unfaltering hope for humanity, their joyful devotedness to God, to be the *conscience* of communities and nations. He felt that the age was really inspired with a divine power of love, and he looked for a ministry pure and fervent enough to be the medium through which this new life might find a voice of command, and make itself felt with a miraculous, renovating touch. He consecrated himself to the work of being, according to the needs and opportunities of his age and land, a mediator of this heavenly influence, and thus truly a minister of religion, — of reunion between man and man, and man and God. And, largely as we have already quoted from his sermons and letters, in illustration of his views, justice to him demands that we should now give further extracts from his private papers. In these he expresses himself with yet more freedom and energy of feeling. We shall copy many passages, even at the risk of repetition, because they will open to us the very heart of the writer. Without attempting any methodical arrangement of these fragments, we may, for the sake of convenience, group them under distinct heads.

### THE MORAL GREATNESS NEEDED IN THE MINISTER.

"The minister needs an heroic mould of mind, a sustained and habitual grandeur of conception, the energy of which may breathe itself into all around. He is not to have the brightness of his conviction crossed by a single shadow of the fear of man. A lofty, ever-present consciousness of being

consecrated to the highest possible work on earth — the awakening and strengthening of what is divinest in human nature — is to possess him. He is to move among his fellows in the majesty and serenity which befit devotedness to heavenly ends. The sublime thought of the *divine love*, which it is Christ's end to awaken, must lift his mind above all transient interests and fortify him against allurement He who sees this as a *reality* beholds a light that dims al. outward glory. This firm and lofty tone of mind is what we need. We should adopt perfection as our own good, with a deep comprehension of its commanding beauty. We should speak of it with the language which it would itself adopt, could it reveal in words its divinity. We should announce this likeness to God, as the end to be sought, not as if teaching a proposition into which we had reasoned ourselves, but as if declaring a profound, radiant, all-penetrating intuition, — as if speaking from experience."

"Positiveness, assumption, is an entirely different state of feeling from the elevation of soul wrought in us by the presence of great thoughts. The devotion of the whole heart to the pursuit of celestial goodness, the consciousness of such an aim, produces no dogmatism, no conceit of infallibility. A minister should have the authority of high virtue. His tone should be that of irreconcilable war against the peculiar evils of his times, and of resolute resistance to the influences of ease, opinion, epicurism, which bribe him to surrender principle. But this moral energy is not to be wasted on what is exterior and superficial; it is to be concentrated in opposition to the very heart and life of what is evil in the society around him and in the age. He is to feel that he is called to withstand the turbulence of the passions, deep-rooted prejudices, the insidious influence of public institutions and of social customs, and that his only reliance, under God, is on that mightiest power in the human soul, the moral power."

"We want *singleness of purpose*, to have the whole soul possessed by a calm, deep, swelling admiration for the divine beauty of goodness, to be resolved to promote this by every energy of our nature. We should be filled with a divine fervor of soul, an expanding warmth of love. This living love has been the power of all true friends and teachers of mankind. It dissolves all restraints, ceremonies, barriers, opens to us the hearts of our fellow-men, and gives to the tone and countenance a winning charm. How should we feel ourselves to be acting in concert with God, in the fulfilment of the grand design to which Jesus and all good beings are devoted, and which comprehends the infinite happiness and glory of all spirits! How should the ineffable sublimity of this end enlarge, invigorate, purify us! The thought of man's possible communion with God, and of his capacity of unbounded participation in the Divine goodness, should give a loftiness and energy of purpose to the preacher which should never for an instant forsake him, but make him unaffectedly superior to all outward dignities, undaunted amidst the opposition of the great, and tenderly sympathizing and respectful to the most debased."

"What we need is a *spiritual force* that will not take the form and hue of the conditions or persons among which we live, but will resist debasing influences, and mould all around us after the pattern of great ideas. We need such an unfaltering faith in Christian virtue, its supremacy, its sure triumph, as will enable us to assert its claims in speech and action even in the most discouraging circumstances. With all mildness, there must be in us an uncompromising spirit. Having found the true good, we cannot yield to public opinion, to private friendship, or to any kind or measure of opposition. We must pay no heed to capricious estimates. Censure should not cost us a moment of anxiety, but only turn our regards more deeply inward to the Divine Oracle, the Voice of God, the Spirit of Christ. The fetters

of worldly compromise must be shaken off, or we cannot take one free step."

"What faculties slumber within, weighed down by the chains of custom! The want of courage to carry out great principles, and to act on them at all risks, is fatal to originality and freshness. Conformity benumbs and cramps genius and creative power. We must commit ourselves fully to a principle of truth and right; we must dare to follow it to the end. Moral independence is the essential condition of loving warmly, thinking deeply, acting efficiently, of having the soul awake, of true life. This habit of reliance on principle should give us a buoyant consciousness of superiority to every outward influence. A far-sighted anticipation of great results from worthy deeds should make us strenuous in action, and fill us with a cheerful trust. No particular interests should absorb our sympathies; but our hearts should flow out in sensibility to every thing which concerns humanity, so that the pursuit of particular objects may expand and exalt our whole power of good, and free us from all narrowness of spirit or fanaticism. A minister should be possessed with the consciousness of a higher law than public opinion, traditionary usage, prevalent fashion. Strictness, sternness, may often be demanded of him to whom conscience is the supreme law; and power and majesty belong to him who yields himself up in willing obedience to the absolute rectitude of God."

"A bold, free tone in conversation, the decided expression of pure and lofty sentiment, may be influential to change the whole temper and cast of thinking of society around us. Are we not traitors to great truths, when we suppress the utterance of them, and let the opposite errors pass unrebuked? Ought not the spirit of the world to be continually met with mildness, yet unfaltering firmness? It cannot be opposed too steadily and uncompromisingly. To bring out a noble spirit into daily intercourse is a more

precious offering to truth than retired speculation and writing. He who leaves a holy life behind him, to bless and guide his fellows, bequeaths to the world a richer legacy than any book. The true, simple view of right should be presented without disguise. High principles are to be advanced as *real* laws; the vague uncertainty wrapped round them by unmeaning professions and practical renunciation is to be stripped away, and they are to be firmly set up as standards for the judgment of all men, public and private. No air of superiority, contempt, anger, no fault-finding, cynicism, no thought of self, should mingle with this testimony to right; but a true love of mankind, a reverence of virtue, a desire to elevate all men to the nobleness for which they are destined, should manifest the depth and purity of our moral convictions."

"An all-pervading devotion to goodness should stamp the whole character, conduct, conversation. But wisdom should guide this frankness. The mind should not be borne away by a fervor which it cannot restrain. There should be manifest self-direction and dignified self-command. Let there be no whining sentimentality about virtue, but a manly consciousness of the greatness of character to which every child of God should attain, — a calm elevation of thought and aim, — a cordial sympathy with all that is generous in society and individuals, — a deep sense of the reality and practicableness of heavenly excellence, — a rational, yet glowing, consciousness of the true glory of a spiritual being. The presence of our fellow-men should not rob us of self-respect, should not restrain us, — restrain the will from energy, the intellect from bold and freest thought, the conscience from prescribing highest duties. We must be palsied by no fear to offend, no desire to please, no dependence upon the judgment of others. The consciousness of self-subsistence, of disinterested conformity to high principle, must communicate an open unreserve to our manners.

We should never distrust the power of a great truth fairly uttered. To act on others, there must be decision of intellect as well as of affection, — a resolute energy of the whole man."

"What a privilege is it to awaken in the souls of men a consciousness of their moral relationship to God! This truly is a creative work. In proportion as the spiritual gains predominance over the material, in our nature, does not the soul take possession of the body, shine through its features, attitude, looks, and reveal itself to those whom words cannot reach? What faith in God and virtue may a tone express! Do we comprehend the power of love, when it truly reigns in us, how it encircles us with an atmosphere, pervades those around us, melts down resistance, soothes excitement? A *mighty* love, diffusing itself through eye, voice, form, what can it not accomplish? Should we not raise ourselves to this state of calm intenseness of love? No man knows the measure of his influence till this force abides in him. How many all around us are really dead! But who can lie inert and torpid before the presence of an absorbing, overflowing affection? Christ's life was a revelation of the spiritual love which filled him. Such a love, and such a life, should be sought by us."

"The minister is to speak as did Christ, listening to the Divine Oracle, and ready to suffer, and to die, if need be, for the truth. A superiority to all outward considerations is the first qualification for the rightful pursuit of his profession. If he desires to stand fair with men, he will be a traitor to his Lord. If he asks himself what will please his hearers, rather than what will benefit them, he desecrates his calling. Is he whose very work is to reform society to take society as his rule? The Christian minister is not sent to preach cold abstractions, to talk of virtue and vice in general terms, to weave moral essays for his hearers to admire and to sleep on; but he is sent to quicken men's

consciences, and to show them to themselves as they are. On all subjects, where his convictions are in conflict with prevailing usages, he is bound to speak frankly, though calmly. Not that he is to deal in vague and passionate denunciation, to be a common scold, a meddlesome fault-finder. But if he thinks the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits a sin against society, he is to say so; if he believes that the sending of rum and opium to savage nations, to spread among them the worst evils of civilization, is a wanton crime, he is to declare his opinion; if he considers the maxims of the business-world hostile to integrity and benevolence, he is to expose their falseness."

"At the present day, there is little need of cautioning ministers against rashness in reproving evil. The danger is all on the other side. As a class, they are most slow to give offence. Their temptation is to sacrifice much to win the affections of their people. Too many satisfy themselves with holding together a congregation by amenity of manners, and by such compromises with prevalent evils as do not involve open criminality. They live by the means of those whose vices they should reprove, and thus are continually ensnared by a selfish prudence. Is it said, that they have families dependent upon them, who may suffer for their fidelity? I answer, Let no minister marry, then, unless the wife he chooses have such a spirit of martyrdom as would make her prefer to be stinted in daily bread rather than see her husband sacrifice one jot or tittle of his moral independence. Is it said, that congregations would be broken up by perfect freedom in the ministers? Better far would it be to preach to empty pews, or in the meanest halls, and there to be a fearless, disinterested witness to the truth, than to hold forth to crowds in gorgeous cathedrals, honored and courted, but not daring to speak one's honest convictions, and awed by the world."

"How shall the minister quicken and preserve a heavenly

tone of spirit? Let him cherish an habitual consciousness of God's infinitely tender, paternal love for every human being, and of the infinite capacity of goodness in all spirits. Let him accustom himself to regard each individual with whom he holds intercourse as made and designed for wisdom, love, power, happiness, without limits. Let him learn to regard all men as now related to God and good spirits, and as welcomed to an endless participation in the ever-unfolding, infinitely benevolent designs of God. Let him joyfully and unreservedly consecrate himself to this work of elevating souls, concentrate his whole being upon it, forget comparatively every thing but this divine end of human development, esteem all power and opportunity as of worth in proportion as they are applicable to this great purpose, and resolve to live and die in advancing *God's plan of spiritual perfection.* Let him not permit himself to be distracted by little interests, inconveniences, engagements, but secure such outward accommodations as favor health, and think no more of circumstances; thus will he avoid frittering away his strength in petty details, and keep his soul whole for great objects. Let him abstain from living in his own past deeds, and waste no energy of thought or will in self-complacent recollections or idle regrets, but use success, praise, reputation, position, as a ground of nobler efforts and larger hopes, as an incentive and encouragement to wider usefulness. Let him be wise in labor, so as not to exhaust the elastic force of mind and thought, and be habitually calm, so as to maintain that clearness of purpose on which enduring strength of will depends. Let him put all his powers in tune, and make his whole life harmonious by inward unity. Above all, let him constantly look up to God as the all-communicating Father, from whom pour down into the faithful soul unfailing streams of spiritual life."

CENTRAL TRUTHS TO BE TAUGHT. — THE TRUE REVIVAL.

"Are there not seasons of spring in the moral world, and is not the present age one of them? Is not a new power now making itself felt? Are we not all asleep? Is there any just sensibility to our connection with God and the eternal world? Is it an improvement of the existing forms of religion which is wanted, or a new form of religion at once more intimate and more universal? Is a nobler manifestation of religion to be given, independent of and superior to preceding modes of manifesting it, and comprehending and reconciling all? Can a nobler life be revealed to men, which they will feel to be nobler, as placed in contrast with present evils? Can a new condition of society be presented in a spirit raised above actual degradations, so that the brightness of the *Divine Life* may be seen to dim all other interests, and draw to itself the entire energy of human thought and feeling?"

"Is God seen to be a PARENT? Is not the intercourse with him too formal? Do we not need an exhibition of his near relations to us, which will awaken a more filial, rejoicing, confiding piety? Do we *believe* that he loves us, loves us *infinitely*, that a stream of goodness is for ever flowing down upon us, that he delights in forgiving, that he joyfully welcomes his returning children? Is this the great view to be presented, that God is desirous to impart *himself* to us, to unite us to him in perfect love? Any view of God, of which love is not the centre, is injurious to the soul which receives it. Is not religion to be unfolded as a profound, serene love of a Moral Parent, who calls us to immortal glory, who by duty is guiding us to a nearer perception of his own glory, to resemblance to himself, to communion with him for ever? Is not this faith in the *perfect love* of God the grand, commanding, central view which is to fill the thoughts, to take strong hold on the will, to excite a calm, full, *concentrated* enthusiasm?"

"Are we not to aim chiefly at calling forth in men a consciousness of their capacity for embracing God and the universe in a pure love, — a love unfolding without limit in strength and vastness? Is not this perfection of soul to be brought before men as a great reality? Are they not to be taught to see the germs of it in the common affections which move them, in the moral principle, and, above all, in their capacity of communion with the Infinite Fountain of all goodness, joy, beauty, life? Is it not the main design of Christianity to give a revelation of this love as the END of man, and as God's ever-fresh inspiration? Is not the world within thus to be laid open, and the spiritual glory of which all outward splendor is the faint emblem made clear, until men are taught to feel a divine joy in their own nature? Should not the great aim be to awaken the consciousness of the greatness of the soul, and a reverence for the moral element in man as an emanation from the Infinite Being, as God's image, voice, life within us? He who would promote this great reformation, for which the religious world is now ready, should live with a vivid, absorbing comprehension of the Divine Life. It should each day revive him, be a perpetual light to him, determine his views of society, and give a tone to every word and action."

"A new voice is needed, a voice of the deepest, calmest, most quickening conviction, in which the whole soul speaks, in which every affection and faculty is concentrated. The divinity of goodness must burn within us, — must awaken all our sensibility, call the whole being into action, come forth irresistibly as from an exhaustless, overflowing fountain, — must give to the voice a penetrating power, and infuse through the whole manner an inspiring animation. What is this *new* spirit which is striving to utter itself, to give a new manifestation of the soul in individuals, a new form to society, and to awaken enthusiasm in overcoming evil? The knowledge of the Perfect God as Infinite Goodness,

Infinite Energy of Good-Will, All-communicating, All-inspiring Love, — is not this the great truth? Must not religion be presented habitually as such an exercise of the moral power in pure, enlarging charity as will bring us within the near and constant influence of Infinite Goodness, till the whole being is penetrated with this spirit of disinterestedness, and filled with trust, gratitude, sympathy, hope, joyful cooperation? Philanthropy, a noble, victorious benevolence, like that of Christ, is to be the great end, — not a precise, defined virtue, but an expansive, ever-enlarging action of goodness. And this love must not be vague, abstract, spiritual merely, but wise, practical, specific, efficient, just, tender, vigorous, in all relations, — of home, of friendship, of society at large, of patriotism, of humanity."

"A profound conviction of God's moral purposes to men, of his design to exalt the soul infinitely, must kindle a purpose in us vast and enduring as his own, give us faith in the possibility of redeeming mankind, give us a respect for every individual, make us feel our unity with all. God must be regarded as enjoining this unlimited love, as calling us to universal brotherhood, and forbidding all that separates us from our kind. He is to be looked up to as the ever-quickening source of life to all men, as the all-embracing, all-communicating spiritual Father of every human being. Love is to be cherished as the fountain of spiritual life within us; we are to feel an adoring, grateful sympathy with the Divine Love, which will prompt us to breathe it in, and to be renewed by its power in the image of God. Man is to be loved as God's child, as God's temple, as the being in whom God reveals himself, and presents himself to us for our love. A confidence in the Divine benignity is to show itself in our unfaltering efforts to lift up the race, to awaken all that is generous and noble in the soul, to remove obstructions to human elevation, to breathe into all men a con-

sciousness of their greatness and a reverence for their fellows. We are to be animated with this new life of love, — of *love for man as man*, — a love which embraces all of every rank and character, — which forgets divisions and outward distinctions, — breaks down the old partition walls, — sees a divine spark in every intelligence, — longs to redress the existing inequalities of society, to elevate all conditions of men to true dignity, to use wealth only as a means of extensive union, not of separation, — which substitutes generous motives for force, — which sees nothing degrading in labor, but honors all useful occupation, — which everywhere is conscious of the just claims and rights of all, resisting the idolatry of the few, ceasing to worship the great, calling upon the mighty to save, not crush the weak, from reverence for our common nature, — and which, in a word, recognizes the infinite worth of every human spirit. This is the true spirit for the minister, a love like that of Jesus on the cross, which sacrifices all to the well-being of man, and the glory and infinite designs of God."

"To raise up the fallen world, the minister needs some sublime objects which can fire the imagination, stir the whole souls of men, and waken them from their selfishness, — some principles suited to human nature, — some truths fitted to work penetratingly, with mighty renewing power. How much is lost by adulterating the truth, by bringing it down to the condition of existing society! Christ stood alone. True Christianity still stands in contrast with the spirit of the world. Its ministers should be more uncompromising, searching, pungent in their preaching. Men need something which will take a strong hold of them, rouse them up to earnest, resolute action on themselves. What are these great truths, principles, objects? What are the *central truths* to be taught? Is not the character of God as a Moral Parent, an Infinite Fulness and Fountain of Perfection, — who gives moral powers to his children for

infinite development, who desires to communicate his own life, who has no other end in creation, who is always present with infinite, parental interest in the soul, — is not this the truth of truths which is to quicken us, and to reveal the ineffably glorious end within our reach? Cannot this spiritual perfection, in all its excellence, beauty, power, be made a visible reality to men, and be set forth to them as the supreme good, the condition of all other good, — as that in which all other good is contained, and, in giving which, God gives all things?"

"What a quickening thought is it, what a ground of infinite hope, that God has given us a nature like his own! — that the whole universe is formed as a field for its nutriment and growth! — that all our relations with nature, society, family, are designed to call out this holy love! Should not heaven be presented as essentially consisting in goodness, in a joyful communion with God, with good spirits, with the universe, by an all-pervading love? Cannot the practical errors, means, and processes of spiritual growth be explained? Moral perfection, of which all particular virtues are the germs, — is not this the grand thought which shows the true glory of the soul, which reveals to us the infinite love of God and the immensity of his designs of benevolence, which gives such profound and awful interest to our relations with him? God's infinity, — does it not make all things possible to us? — does it not open before us an infinite future of progress? — does it not offer to us a Being of exhaustless love, with whom we may commune more intimately for ever? What will he not be to us, if we heartily adopt and obey his law? What will he not communicate from his fulness to those who use their moral power to avail themselves of his omnipotence?"

"The distinguishing glory of Christ's character is to be brought out and unfolded with new power. Is he viewed enough as a whole? Is it seen that his virtue was a perfect,

harmonious one? The blessedness of the spirit of Christ, as a *universal love* which can choose, at all sacrifices, the highest good, and give self wholly up in disinterested service, — this is to be shown in all its quickening reality; it is to be exhibited as God's own spirit, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the principle of heavenly life, the bond of vital union with the Divine Being, the germ of infinite and eternal virtue. God is the source, object, model, of this perfect love. His infinite excellence gives infinite glory to the soul which is fixed on him as its object. This goodness is his delight; he nourishes it in us, renews it from himself, makes it one with him. The true good, to which the soul should turn, is moral likeness to God, being perfect as he is perfect. This union with him, this devotion to the cause of spreading his kingdom through the universe, is the spirit of Christ. This makes Christ's character the image of the Infinite Beauty. This is to be taught as the only true life. Christ taught an abandonment of all objects which men delight in, from a profound and earnest aspiration after perfect goodness. Shall the ministers of Christ make compromises with lower principles? Shall they bring Christianity down to the standard of the world?"

"Nothing will be done by the minister till he arouses in men a fervent energy of the moral principle. Decency, prudence, self-interest, regard to comfort, respectability, are nothing. Men must be made to thirst for perfect goodness, to see its eternal beauty, to long for it with the full force of their spiritual affections. Will not the heart respond to the claims of God and Christ and celestial virtue, when plainly urged? Is there not an inward tendency of our spiritual being to moral perfection, which insures a joyful acquiescence in the highest appeals? May not men be made to see the rudiments of these heavenly capacities in themselves, — to feel that they have experienced a peculiar joy in love, — that they have gained new life by sacrifices to uprightness?

Unbounded progress in virtue, in love, light, power, — all-embracing philanthropy, — the absorption of selfishness in universal good-will, — victory over debasing influences, — spiritual liberation from all low impulses, — the ever-near influences of the Holy Spirit, — the divine love manifested in Christ, — the almighty design of God to redeem men from all iniquity, — the prospect of immortality, of never-ending approach to God, of ever-growing participation in his life, and ever-widening coöperation with his beneficence, — these are the great truths which come home with irresistible power to the divine principle within us. Ought any views but these to be presented? He alone can speak of sin as an infinite evil, and concentrate against it the whole energy of the soul's aversion, dread, displeasure, who has risen into the Divine light, who has faith in the unlimited capacities of our spiritual nature, who perceives the reality of heavenly goodness, who knows that by love man has affinity to God."

### TRUE PREACHING.

"I can conceive of a style of preaching seldom heard as yet. It will spring from the conviction of a higher state of humanity as possible now, and must come from the souls of teachers who have reached to that new state themselves. Would not a preacher, really inspired with the grandeur of Christian virtue, come into so vivifying a union with the minds of his hearers as to raise them to an intensity of intellectual and moral action of which they were incapable before? In proportion as the minister attains to this elevation, he will speak with plainness and without evasion. There is a certain fastidious way of treating subjects, as if they would be tarnished by direct speech, which destroys the power of preachers. The minister has other work than to amuse men. Grace, harmony, energy, should be blended and merged in the unity of the sublime end to which they

all conspire. No poetical, imaginative air should color his discourse; but divine goodness should be spoken of as the great practical reality. He must arouse the conscience to its solemn claims; he must waken the will to the earnest and resolute pursuit of it. He should speak with urgency, — not that urgency which belongs to personal and narrow interests, but that which befits a mind exalted by the living knowledge of an infinite good."

"We ought to stand up before men, so filled with the greatness and beneficence of our function, as to be wholly unconscious of self, and utterly superior to frowns or favor, — strong, serene, free, inspired. For true eloquence there is but one preparation; it is to make the thought of spiritual perfection, of God's life within the soul, real to ourselves by habitual experience. We need calm, collected, fearless minds, elevated by the contemplation of spiritual truth, and brought near to men by a most earnest feeling of brotherhood. O the unspeakable littleness of a soul which, intrusted with Christianity, speaking in God's name to immortal beings, with infinite excitements to the most enlarged and fervent love, sinks down into narrow self-regard, and is chiefly solicitous of its own honor! The pulpit should be to the minister an altar upon which he may offer himself up as a living sacrifice, pure, spotless."

"How can a man preach as he should, until he sees in his fellow-creatures an infinite moral capacity? A single sentence from the lips of one who has faith in humanity is worth volumes of ordinary sermons. What sympathy should the minister feel with the crushed, imprisoned, fallen spirits of men! He should comprehend what a depth he looks into, when he looks into a soul, of which endless space is but a faint emblem. The common tone of our minds is in utter contradiction to our professed faith as Christians. We have no faith in the spiritual in ourselves and in others, — in the unspeakable grandeur of a human being. Our daily

skepticism makes us weak preachers. We are to accustom ourselves to see infinite heights and depths in man. The preacher should have such a conviction of the divinity of Christian goodness, such a faith in love as a participation of the Divine Life, as to have the whole energy of his being concentrated in an inextinguishable thirst for the Holy Spirit in himself, an irrepressible longing to awaken a like aspiration in his fellow-men."

"The minister is to speak with the same conviction of spiritual life that filled Jesus Christ. He is to be truly an inspired, Heaven-ordained prophet. What sanctity, what separation from selfish views, what entire dedication of his whole being to the recovery, freedom, growth, perfection of the immortal spirit should characterize him! His whole life should be a discipline of purification from earthly influences. He should be a perpetual testimony of godlike goodness to the world which he would raise. He should so live, that the Spirit may shine out through him, and quicken all around him. What an office, — to awaken the divine in man! The glorious form of humanity set before us in Christ should be ever before the minister. The preacher can never preach as he ought, never write or speak with the power belonging to his office, unless he feels ever present the deep conviction of union with God and Christ and all good spirits. He is not alone. The mightiest energies in the universe are co-operating with him. He must blend himself with God's grand reconciling agencies. The Roman, the Spartan, could merge his own individual good in the national well-being. In a far higher tone of feeling, the minister should enter into, and be absorbed by, the Spiritual Community of which God is the Life."

The fervent enthusiasm with which Dr. Channing regarded the privileges and responsibilities of his profession, and his vivid sense of the grand tendencies of the

age towards an embodiment in social life of the spirit of love, made him most anxiously desire to see a body of young men entering the ministry who could rise above sectarian enthralments and worldly hindrances and give themselves up unreservedly to the work of advancing a revival of practical goodness. This state of mind appears in all his printed sermons of this period,* as well as in his private papers, from which we select three.

The first is a letter to Henry Ware, Jun., who had just been appointed Professor of Pastoral Care in the Cambridge Divinity School, and was about entering upon the office in which, for so many years, he opened his pure and earnest spirit as a fountain of living waters for his younger brethren. Humble as he was wise, Mr. Ware had sought counsel from Dr. Channing as to the best modes of performing his duties, and the following is the reply to his letter : —

"*St. Croix, January* 29, 1831.

"My dear Sir, — I thank you for your letter. I have received few which have given me greater pleasure. To know that you are getting strength for your great work is almost as gratifying to me as to your own family. I have sympathized with you in your sufferings, and would share your gratitude in your present bright prospects.

"I will begin with answering the end of your letter. You ask my views respecting your work. The discourse which you have thought fit to publish from my volume shows you the spirit which, as I think, should characterize the institution. I wish the young men to be more and more imbued with the 'spirit of truth,' the supreme love of truth, the least understood, least honored, least cherished of the virtues, and yet the cardinal virtue of a religious teacher. It is not

* Works, Vol. III., pp. 137, 209, 229, 259.

hard to stir up young men to seek distinction by paradoxes and startling novelties; but to inspire that love of truth which makes the young fear their own errors as much as those of others, opens the mind to every new ray of light, and quickens it to improvement in all known virtue, as the best preparation for knowing higher,— this is no easy task. And yet, until a new thirst for truth, such, I fear, as is not now felt, takes possession of some gifted minds, we shall make little progress. I apprehend that there is but one way of putting an end to our present dissensions; and that is, not the triumph of any existing system over all others, but the acquisition of something better than the best we now have. The way to reconcile men who are quarrelling in a fog is, to let in some new and brighter light. It seems to me that we are fighting now in a low, misty valley. A man who should gain some elevated position, overlooking our imagined heights of thought, and who would lead us after him, would set us all right in a short time.

"Another idea expressed in my discourse impresses me more; and that is, the importance of a spirit of martyrdom. No man is fitted to preach or promote Christianity who is not fitted to die for it. He, in whom the pure and sublime virtue of Christianity has not wrought the conviction of its own unrivalled worth and glory, so that he can 'count all things loss for it,' cannot go forth with the power which is necessary for one who is to be its minister in this crooked and perverse generation.

"I think, in my discourse, that I did not attach sufficient importance to the spirit of humility. I am satisfied that when Jesus said, 'He that shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven,' he meant by *greatness* singular efficiency and eminence in promoting his religion. By humility, in this place, we are to understand the triumph of love over the passion for superiority, and a deep sympathy with the weakest and lowest

of our brethren. All our institutions, domestic, political, and religious, are feeding the passion for distinction and superiority; and yet nothing, I believe, is so hostile to the *power* which a minister should covet above all things, — the power of approaching the souls of men, and of communicating to them what is best in his own soul. If I could, I would blot out from the minds of our young men the ideas of distinction and superiority. I would have them venerate the Divine image in their poorest fellow-creatures too much to think of making them subservient to their own glory. I would have them specially concerned for the poor, ignorant, and suffering; and, for this end, I wish they would work with Dr. Tuckerman in the ministry at large.

"In your discourse at the inauguration, I understand you express a desire to imbue the theological students with a professional spirit, and speak of the influence their *profession* gives them. I fear I differ from you. The separation of the ministry from their brethren has wrought incalculable mischief. The ideas of any peculiar sanctity belonging to them, of their enjoying a peculiar nearness to, or influence with, God, or of their obligation to any peculiar virtues, are false, and injure alike the teacher and the taught. Every Christian is a teacher; and, under Christianity, nothing but personal sanctity should win respect.

"You did not name the particular points on which you wished my views. If my little light can be useful to you in any respect, I will communicate it most cheerfully."

The second is a brief essay on Public Prayer, which Dr. Channing wrote out, at Mr. Ware's request, for the use of the students in the Divinity School.

"Public prayer answers its end in proportion as it makes the hearer pray. To *excite the spirit of prayer in the congregation* is the test of true public devotion.

"Prayer is the expression of deep want to a Being of Infinite Fulness and Goodness.

"The spirit of prayer, therefore, consists in consciousness of deep want, and in faith in God's infinite power and willingness to supply.

"The minister, to excite this spirit in others, must possess it himself, that is, must cherish this consciousness and this faith.

"The want which prayer breathes is spiritual, or the want of spiritual life, of moral perfection, of godlike love, of redemption from moral evil, of spotless purity, of union with God, of universal charity, &c.

"No minister can pray aright in whom this want is not deeply felt. It should be intense, — the yearning of his soul. To excite it, his mind should turn often to its object, — that is, to moral perfection, as manifested in God, in Christ, in great and holy men, — to virtue, in its most lovely and inspiring forms, to the workings of the spiritual life in himself and others, — and to all the motives by which moral excellence will become to him the supreme good, absorbing all others.

"Another means of exciting this consciousness is this. When the bright idea of moral, Christian excellence is awakening strong aspiration, he should look into himself and see his deep deficiency, and learn the greatness of his want, the vastness of the change required to realize his conception of excellence.

"But faith is as needful as consciousness of want; and to cherish this, nothing is so important as to view God in the peculiar light in which he is placed by Christianity. The minister must habitually look up to him as a Spiritual Father and Fountain, as having an infinite interest in the human soul, as desiring its recovery and perfection, as ever present to give his Spirit, and as having sent his Son to manifest him in this character and to awaken this faith in his spiritual love. Until this view of God takes the place of all

others, becomes habitual, becomes associated with his name and every thought of him, we shall not know the full worth and power of Christianity, and shall pray imperfectly. Christianity has no higher end than to awaken faith in God, as the Spiritual, Celestial Father, as the Friend of the soul, as desiring to impart to it a celestial life.

"If these views of prayer be just, then the *form* of public prayer is easily settled.

"It must be simple. Deep want is ambitious of no ornaments.

"It must avoid diffuseness. Earnest want gives directness and condensation to language. It must overflow with natural expressions of love, of Christian virtue, and of delight in God as its source. A spiritual tone must pervade it.

"This naturalness, this expression of spiritual sensibilities as if they formed the soul's essence and life, is the chief power of public prayer."

The third is an extract from a letter to a young friend who had but little sympathy with the ministerial profession as at present conducted. In this, Dr. Channing expresses a favorite view, which he revolved much in thought, with a growing conviction of its importance, and which he frequently advocated in conversation, although he was fully aware of the difficulties in the way of such an enterprise, and had neither strength nor time to give to it himself.

"I wish there were a theological institution in which young men might be educated who have no taste for philosophy, and no great respect for a theology which must be dug out of lexicons and antiquities, but who desire to get into the heart of the religion and use it for the elevation of the people, for the redress of all wrong."

And now that we have learned, in these various ways, how high was Dr. Channing's estimate of his vocation, let us, for a few moments, regard him in the active discharge of his ministerial duties. No description, indeed, can convey an adequate impression of the peculiar charm of his presence and manner as a preacher; yet a few outlines may awaken grateful memories in those who enjoyed the privilege of listening to him, and, by the power of sympathy, may call up some not unworthy image in the minds of others who never breathed in his influence by personal communion. In the following familiar letter to a friend, a frequent hearer has rapidly sketched the effect of his preaching, and therein justly delineated one source of its power, — its pervading humanity. Without a trace of sentimentalism, Dr. Channing overflowed with genuine feeling, which was all the more affecting because he never purposely manifested, but rather restrained, his sensibility.

"Notwithstanding Dr. Channing's varied talents, benignity is the most conspicuous feature of his character. He is fervently devout; and when the saint extends his arms to implore a blessing on his beloved people, we fancy his God smiles upon his request, and silently respond, 'Whom *thou* blessest is blessed.' He prays; — we hear the patriot intercede for his country, and the philanthropist for mankind. His prayers are not preaching. He returns thanks for natural affection and family attachments, and we see the dutiful son, the affectionate brother and husband. Before he read the apostolic precept, 'Rejoice with those who do rejoice and weep with those that weep,' nature had written upon his heart the law of sympathy, and he never could mock the ear of grief by pitiless recited consolation. Does he plead the cause of the poor? We shudder while 'the unkind blast of

winter pierces the walls of the decayed cottage, and while the half-covered bed yields no refuge from the cold.' His words reach the heart, when he warns us not to repeat '*Our* Father who art in heaven,' unless we are really brethren to the poor and afflicted. An attentive observer of life, he delineates the operations of the passions, and his hearers whisper, — 'Who has betrayed our secrets? what penetrating eye has pierced our hearts? how knows he so to describe the tortures of envy, ambition, and shame?' He shows us the vicious youth, 'irritable and desponding,' a prey to the agonies of remorse, and ready forcibly to stop the rapid pulses of his heart, and we exclaim, — 'Forbear! forbear! the picture is too faithful!' Yet admiration at his skill almost makes us pleased to be pained. The passions obey his voice. He excites at will hope, fear, and pity."

Another source of Dr. Channing's power was his sincerity. He was transparent in simple earnestness. The personal limitations of the speaker and writer disappeared, and he seemed to be only a pure medium through which truth was uttering itself. The style of composition, so clear, graceful, and strong, — the rich variety of manner, so fervent and beautiful, and so doubly affecting from the contrast it presented of physical infirmity with spiritual force, were forgotten, and the hearer found himself translated to the mount of vision upon which the prophet was standing face to face with heaven and Deity. He was wholly unartificial, unconscious, and absorbed in his subject. He stood awed, yet animated, between God above and his listening brethren. "On no account," he once said to a young brother in the ministry, "on no account, in your public services, try to exhibit by look or tone any emotion which you do not feel. If you feel coldly, appear so. The

sermon may be lost, but your own truthfulness will be preserved." By this rule he invariably governed himself. The effect which he produced was deep and indelible, because his eloquence was so lost sight of and swallowed up in the glory of his theme.

And this leads us to a recognition of the chief source of his power, which we have already noticed as characterizing his youth, — his living sense of spiritual realities. The pulpit was to him the grandest position upon earth, and he entered it with a most exalting, yet disinterested, sense of its dignified and solemn trusts. In standing up before a congregation as a minister of God, he was conscious that he assumed responsibilities as much vaster than those of the judge upon the bench, of the legislator in the halls of council, of the executive officer upon his seat of power, as conscience is higher than intellect, common social affection, or natural desires. He voluntarily became a mediator between the Infinite Being and finite spirits. It has been well said, — "There was no power of mind, however lofty, that his function did not to him appear to bring into urgent requisition. Preaching never seemed to him for an instant the discharge of a mere professional duty, the fulfilment of a formal task. *It was the great action of his life.* It was the greatest action that could be demanded of any life. He felt that never Demosthenes nor Cicero, that never Burke nor Chatham, had a greater work to do than he had every Sunday. He poured into his office his whole mind and heart. The preparation for it was a work of consecrated genius; it was as if every week he had made a poem or an oration." *

* Dr. Dewey's Discourse on the Character and Writings of Channing, pp. 7, 8.

It was more; for he considered the sermon, in our day, as the highest possible mode of expression, combining oration, poetry, and prophecy in one.

We cannot better sum up these general views of Dr. Channing as a preacher, than by continuing our extracts from the notice just quoted. "No preacher, perhaps, had ever at command the stores of a richer imagination. But all was sober, in his administration of religion. To utter the truth, the naked truth, was his highest aim and ambition. The effect he was willing to leave with God and with the heart of the hearer. He never seemed to labor so much to enforce truth as to utter it; but this kind of utterance, this swelling and almost bursting of the inmost heart to express itself, was the most powerful enforcement. There was always, however, a chastening and restraining hand laid upon the strong nature within; and this manner has led some, I believe, to deny to Channing the gift of the highest eloquence. I know not what they call eloquence; but this restrained emotion always seems to me one of its most touching demonstrations; surely that which reaches the heart and unlocks the fountain of tears is its very essence; and that which penetrates to the still depths of the conscience, that lie beneath tears, is its very awfulness and grandeur. Such was the eloquence of Channing. I shall never forget the effect upon me of the first sermon I ever heard from him. Shall I confess, too, that, holding then a faith somewhat different from his, I listened to him with a certain degree of distrust and prejudice? These barriers, however, soon gave way; and such was the effect of the simple and heart-touching truths and tones which fell from his lips, that it would have been a relief to me to have bowed my

head and to have wept without restraint, through the whole service. And yet I did not weep ; for there was something in that impression too solemn and deep for tears. I claim perfection for nothing human ; . . . . . but certainly no preaching that I have heard has come so near, in this respect, to the model in my mind, — I say not irreverently, the Great Model, — as the preaching of Channing. . . . . In most men's religious feeling, there is something singularly general and vague ; . . . . they do not meditate their religion deeply in their hearts. . . . . But it was not so with the remarkable and venerable person of whom I speak. His thoughts on this theme, the deep and living verities of his own experience, had an original impress, a marked individuality, a heart-felt truth, and a singular power to penetrate the heart. His words had a strange and heart-stirring vitality. Some living power within seemed to preside over the selection and tone of every word, and to give it more than the force and weight of a whole discourse from other men." *

And now let us go, on some Sunday morning, to the meeting-house in Federal Street, and hear for ourselves this wonderful preacher. The doors are crowded ; and as we enter, we see that there are but few vacant seats, and that the owners of the pews are hospitably welcoming strangers, whom the sexton is conducting up the aisles. There is no excitement in the audience, but deep, calm expectation. With a somewhat rapid and an elastic step, a person small in stature, thin and pale, and carefully enveloped, ascends the pulpit stair. It is he. For a moment, he deliberately and benignantly surveys

* Ibid., pp. 9 - 11

the large congregation, as if drinking in the influence of so many human beings ; and then, laying aside his outer garments, and putting on the black silk gown, he selects the hymn and passage from Scripture, and, taking his seat, awaits in quiet contemplation the time for commencing the service. What impresses us now, in his appearance, is its exceeding delicacy, refinement, and spiritualized beauty. In the hollow eye, the sunken cheeks, and the deep lines around the mouth, the chronic debility of many years has left an ineffaceable impress. But on the polished brow, with its rounded temples, shadowed by one falling lock, and on the beaming countenance, there hovers a serenity which seems to brighten the whole head with a halo.

The voluntary on the organ has been played, the opening invocation has been offered by the assistant in the pulpit, and the choir and congregation have joined in singing the first hymn ; — and now he rises, and spreading out his arms, says, — " Let us unite in prayer." What a welcome to near communion with the Heavenly Father is there in the tremulous tenderness of that invitation ! This is a solemn reality, and no formal rite, to him. The Infinite is here, around all, within all. What awful, yet confiding reverence, what relying affection, what profound gratitude, what unutterable longing, what consciousness of intimate spiritual relationship, what vast anticipations of progressive destiny, inspire these few, simple, measured, most variously modulated words ! How the very peace of heaven seems to enter and settle down upon the hushed assembly !

There follows a pause and perfect silence for a few moments, which the spirit feels its need of, that it may reassume its self-control and power of active thought.

And now the Bible is opened; the chapter to be read is the fifteenth of the Gospel of John. The grand announcement is spoken, the majestic claim is made, — "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." How often we have heard these sentences! and yet did we ever before begin to know their exhaustless wealth of meaning? What depth, volume, expressiveness in those intonations! "That *my joy* might remain in you, and that your joy might be *full*." Yes, O most honored brother! now we have gained a glimpse of the rich life of thy godlike disinterestedness. We shall be, indeed, thy "*friends*," "when we love one another as thou didst love us." It is enough. No mere rhetorician, however trained and skilful, could have made these words so penetrating in pathetic sweetness, so invigorating in unbounded hope. The very smile and hand of the Saviour seem to have been upon us in blessing and power. Every emphasis and inflection of the reader was fraught with his own experience. The saying is no longer a mystical metaphor to us, — "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him"; for the fact is illustrated before our eyes. The hymn is read. What melody! what cadence! The tone may be too prolonged, and too undulating the accent; but we can never, never again forget those lines. In many a distant scene of doubt and fear, of trial and temptation, their music will come vibrating through the inner chambers of our hearts, and, at the sound, our bosom-sins will disappear, "awed by the presence" of the "Great Invisible."

The singing is over. The hearts of the hearers are attuned. The spirit of the preacher has already per-

vaded them, and softened them to harmony. It is the "new commandment" of which he is to discourse. He begins by portraying the overflowing sympathy with which Jesus forgot his own impending sufferings, in his desire to cheer the little band so soon to be scattered. We are there with them in the upper chamber; we are bathed in that flood of benignity; can we ever be faithless to this most lovely and all-loving friend? Thence passing outwards, he lays open before us the universal humanity of the Son of Man made Son of God, till we see that the fulness of the Spirit in him, his oneness with the Father, was his pure and perfect benevolence, — till we begin to apprehend how such a sublime self-sacrifice might fit the Christ to be the abiding mediator between heaven and earth, the ruler over the ages to introduce among mankind the kingdom of God. What affectionate devotion, what adoring reverence, what quick discrimination, what delicate perception, what vividness, characterized this sketch of the Master! Thus ends the first branch of the sermon. And now he is to assure us, all selfish, immersed in the busy anxieties of life, habitually incased in prejudices and conventionality, as we may be, that this spirit of unlimited brotherly kindness is the only befitting spirit for any man, for every man, — that we are encouraged to aspire after it, that we can attain to it, that we are Christians only in the measure in which it sanctifies us. How carefully he meets and disarms objections! how calmly he removes all fear of undue enthusiasm! how deliberate and definite does he make the statement of his propositions! The sound sense and judgment of the preacher strike us now as much as his devout earnestness did before. There is nothing vague, dreamy, extravagant in this cool rea-

soner. Gradually he awakens the memory and conscience of his hearers, and reveals to them, from their own observation and experience, with a terrible distinctness of contrast, what the professed Christians of Christendom actually are. There are no expletives, no fulminations, no fanatical outpourings. But the small figure dilates, — the luminous gray eye now flashes with indignation, now softens in pity, — and the outstretched arm and clenched hand are lifted in sign of protest and warning, as the wrongs which man inflicts on man are presented with brief but glowing outlines. How the accidental honors of the so-called great flutter like filthy rags, and crumble into dust, as the meanness of arbitrary power and worldly ambition is exposed! How the down-trodden outcasts rise up in more than royal dignity, as the intrinsic grandeur of man reveals itself through their badges of ignominious servitude! The preacher now enlarges upon the greatness of man; he shows how worthy every human being is of love, for his nature, if not for his character. Sin and degradation are made to appear unspeakably mournful, when measured by the majestic innate powers, the celestial destiny, appointed to the most debased; every spirit becomes venerable to us, as heir of God and coheir of Christ, as the once lost but now found, the once dead but now living, the prodigal yet dearly loved child of the Heavenly Father. And as our gaze wanders over the congregation, in kindling or tearful eyes, in pallid or flushed cheeks, in smiling or firm-set lips of many a hearer, is displayed the new resolve just registered in the will, to lead a truly *manly* life, by consecrating one's self to the divine work of raising all men upright in the image of God.

A brief petition and benediction end the service; and after a few warm pressures of the hand, and mutual congratulations that such a sermon has been heard, the congregation disperses. If this is the first time we have listened to the preacher, we walk home through the thronged streets, we look upon our fellow-men, we tread the earth, we breathe the air, we feel the sunshine, with a new consciousness of life. This hour has been an era in existence. Never again can we doubt God's love, disbelieve in Christ, despond for ourselves, despise our fellows, — never again sigh over the drudgery, the tameness, the tantalizing disappointments of this work-day world. How solemn in grandeur, how unspeakably magnificent, how wonderful, how fresh with beauty and joy, open now before us the present lot, the future career, of man! This sketch may seem to some readers extravagant, but it will be thought, on the other hand, tame and cold by those who in memory recall the reality which it so faintly resembles.

It was doubtless owing to the energy with which Dr. Channing threw his whole soul into his ministrations, that he found the usual pulpit services so exhausting. Full of conscientiousness and deep emotion, ideal and aspiring to a most rare degree, concentrated and intense in all his mental and moral processes, unhabituated to relaxation and variety of employment, he constantly experienced extreme nervous prostration after preaching. Though benefited by the rest and refreshment of foreign travel, he immediately found, upon his return, that he should be entirely broken down, if he attempted to resume the whole of his duties. And so, with the sense of duty to his parish which was con-

spicuous throughout his ministry, he determined at once to lay before them his condition and the exact measure of his ability. His own wish was to have a colleague settled with him; but he chose to leave the society free to make the first movement, and addressed them, therefore, as follows: —

"*Portsmouth, R. I., Sept.* 4, 1823.

"CHRISTIAN FRIENDS: — My much esteemed assistant, Mr. Dewey, having made known to me his desire to be released from his present engagement, I am compelled to solicit again your attention to the subject of obtaining for me such aid as circumstances may render necessary. I have already stated to you, and I beg to repeat it, that the improvement of my health, though very encouraging, is not such as to warrant me to take on myself all the duties and services ordinarily expected from ministers; nor ought I to make the attempt, until the strength which I have gained is not only confirmed, but increased. Without undue solicitude for life, I desire earnestly to be capable, whilst I live, of some exertion which may be useful to my people and family; and this object demands, especially at the present moment, great care in proportioning my labors to my strength. The thought of being reduced again to the inactivity and uselessness to which I have been condemned for some time past almost overwhelms me; and although I trust, that, should God appoint me this trial, he would strengthen me to bear it, still I feel that I am not only permitted, but required, to use whatever means of averting it he may afford. I have no right, by laboring beyond my strength, to throw away the degree of health which I have gained by so many sacrifices; nor should I, in this way, consult your interests any more than my own comfort. Under these impressions, I have endeavoured to judge to what extent I may now resume my labors. I have a strong confidence that I can

take half the services on Sunday without injury. More than this I cannot attempt with safety, and the experience of several years makes me fearful that it will occasionally be prudent for me to abstain from preaching on both parts of the day. How long I may require these indulgences I cannot even conjecture; for the effect of returning to labors which have been so long discontinued is very doubtful. I am compelled, however, to say, that, as debility has oppressed me for years, I am authorized to anticipate only a gradual and slow increase of strength, and that there is no probability of my resuming speedily all the duties of my office. Under these circumstances, I am exceedingly desirous that such provisions should be made for the pulpit as will secure to my people the most edifying and acceptable services; and I feel as if this would prove a medicine to the body, by the relief and joy it would give to my mind. For this end, I have thought proper to make this free communication in regard to my state, prospects, hopes, and fears, and to assure you of my disposition to concur with you in whatever measures the welfare and religious improvement of the church may be thought to require.

"I cannot close this communication without renewing my thanksgivings to Almighty God for restoring me to you with some ability to serve you. Longer experience, and more extensive observation of human affairs, have only served to recommend to me the Christian ministry, and to strengthen my wish to live and die in the discharge of its duties. Imploring for you every blessing in this world and in the world to come, I subscribe myself

"Your affectionate friend and grateful pastor."

At a meeting of the proprietors of the meeting-house in Federal Street, September 22, this letter was read, and the vote unanimously passed, "That it is expedient *to settle* a colleague with the Rev. Dr. Channing, pro-

vided it will meet with his concurrence, and provided that an arrangement can be made in relation to salaries satisfactory to the society and the pastors." A committee was also appointed to confer with Dr. Channing. His wishes were thus expressed in consequence : —

"*Boston, Sept.* 26, 1823.

"GENTLEMEN : — The votes of the proprietors of the church in Federal Street, at their meeting on September 22, 1823, having been communicated to me, I take an early opportunity to express my views and feelings in relation to the subjects to which they refer, and I shall aim to do this with all possible simplicity.

"The *first* question suggested by the votes is, whether I wish a *colleague*. On this point I have not spoken freely, because I have not wished to influence the opinion of my parishioners. I have chosen that they should act from their own deliberate and independent convictions in an affair so important as the settlement of another minister, — one of the most important in life, — the effects of which will extend beyond themselves to their children, and be felt in the society perhaps long after I am separated from it. But now that my opinion is requested, I have no hesitation in saying that I shall receive a colleague with pleasure ; not merely because I shall find the greatest relief in such an arrangement, but chiefly because I hope from it the greatest good to the society. I should be most grateful to God, had I strength equal to the whole duties of the ministry. For these duties are my happiness, and I am aware that there are strong motives for having them discharged by a single pastor.

"But conscious as I am that I have at no period had sufficient health to perform them thoroughly, and persuaded that I must now be assisted in them, the question offers itself, whether aid shall be sought for me in a variety and

succession of young unsettled preachers, or in a permanent assistant; and the last mode seems to me to possess decided advantages, provided the parish can secure an individual whose piety, ability, and general acceptableness shall afford pledges of a useful ministry. From such a man they will receive instructions more adapted to their wants, character, and state, more matured by experience, and more imbued with a deep, affectionate interest in their welfare, than can be expected from young men and strangers; and they will receive pastoral aids, not only from the pulpit, but of a more private and perhaps not less useful nature. His instructions, too, will be heard with less of that curiosity and spirit of criticism by which the efficacy of preaching is weakened, and with more of that personal regard which adds weight to truth.

"Under such a man, I should hope to see an improvement of the condition of our society, — not of its outward condition, for this is sufficiently prosperous, but of its interior, religious, spiritual state. I should hope to see the marks and evidences of profounder veneration for Christianity, of more faithful application of it to the character, of a more living and fruitful piety, and of a stronger interest in the cause and diffusion of our religion. I feel that greater improvements are needed among us. Not that I have ground to complain of deficiency of attachment to myself. But what I desire is, a greater attachment to that cause, that religion, of which I am merely the instrument, and in comparison with which I am nothing, and deserve no consideration. With God's blessing on the labor of another joined to my own, I trust that the purposes of our connection would be answered more effectually than they have yet been; and this is my great motive for concurring, as I candidly do, in the opinion of the society on the subject of a colleague, as expressed in their vote.

"The question of *salary* is the *second* on which I pre-

sume I am expected to speak; and I wish to speak as frankly on this as on the preceding one. I am aware that this is a question of great delicacy, for the connection of a minister with his people is one of sentiment, not interest; and his usefulness can hardly suffer more than by his falling under the suspicion of mercenary views.

"To prevent misconstructions which may diminish my power of doing good to my people, and not from any selfish, excessive sensitiveness to opinion, I think proper to observe, then, that my expenditures equal my income, and that during my ministry I have laid up nothing. By this I do not mean, that my whole salary and other income are necessary to the support of myself and my family. But on every man there are various claims, which generally multiply as he advances in life; some of a sacred character, which must on no account be slighted; others less binding, but still of such a nature that the inability to meet them is painful, and should not be voluntarily incurred. In addition to more private claims, there are at present so many institutions and enterprises for promoting the cause of religion and human happiness, which invite and deserve a Christian's assistance, that I should be grateful to Providence for an increase of property, and must regard a diminution of it as an evil. If, indeed, I were connected with a poor congregation, I should feel that to serve them without a salary, or with a very small one, was the method prescribed by Providence for the exercise of my charity; but knowing that my people respect themselves too highly to desire or receive charitable aid, and believing, too, that none of us contribute too much, and few enough, to the cause of Christianity, I do not consider myself as called or authorized to give up a large part of the compensation which I have received. I will cheerfully relinquish one quarter of my salary, which will leave me about sixteen hundred dollars per annum; and when the conditions on which I was settled are remem-

bered, and when it is considered that I am devoting my life and best powers to the ministry, I presume that my claims will be thought by none unreasonable. I am, however, quite ignorant of the feelings of the society on this point; and earnestly desiring, that, in such a connection as ours, all secret discontents and heart-burnings may be avoided, I hope that these feelings will be fully and freely expressed.

"I cannot close this communication without imploring Divine guidance for my people and myself, that we may adopt such measures as will strengthen our union, and build us up in the faith and hope, in the spirit and most exalted virtues, of our religion.

"With great affection and respect, your friend and pastor."

On September 29th, the foregoing letter was read to the proprietors, who voted, "That the letter of the Rev. Dr. Channing to the Committee is highly acceptable to the proprietors of the Federal Street meeting-house," and that the propositions of the letter and of the Committee be accepted. The Committee, in their report, had said that the proposed salary of Dr. Channing "is the result of his voluntary relinquishment, in the event of the settlement of a colleague, of a portion of his present income, the continuance of which he is entitled to claim. The motives and views on this head expressed in his letter are entirely satisfactory to the Committee. . . . . They believe it to be unnecessary to enlarge on such a topic, and in relation to a connection so highly and justly valued by every member of the society."

In a private letter to a friend, Dr. Channing thus briefly, yet fully, opens his heart in relation to the proposed arrangement: —

"*Sept.* 24, 1823. My mind is somewhat engaged now

by parish affairs, my people having expressed a desire of establishing a colleague with me, an event too interesting to them and me to be anticipated without some concern, though I earnestly wish to make the experiment. I dare not hope to be equal to all the duties of my office, and I cannot but fear lest my people may suffer through my infirmities. I am aware of having my full share of imperfections; but it seems to me that I should find satisfaction in having a colleague, who will be much more useful than myself, and conspicuously more useful. I do not despair, indeed; but I have not done as much good as I hoped, though as much, perhaps, as I had a right to expect."

In the spring of 1824, the Rev. Ezra Stiles Gannett was invited and ordained to be the Associate Pastor of the Federal Street Society. The relations between Dr. Channing and his colleague were, for the long period of eighteen years, most intimate, cordial, and mutually beneficial. Dr. Gannett has expressed, for himself, in his address at the funeral services of his spiritual father, his tender and reverential affection "for one whom he honored not less because he may have loved him more than others who beheld him at a greater distance," and has thus borne his testimony to Dr. Channing's faithfulness in the delicate and difficult duties of their official intercourse: — "After my connection with this society, he encouraged me in every plan I undertook, welcomed every sign of increasing sympathy and energy among us, and cheered me under every occasion of despondency. How often would my spirit have wholly sunk within me, if he had not animated me to new struggle with the discouragement of my own heart!" And, on the other hand, Dr. Channing paid the following warm tribute to Mr. Gannett, on the occasion when that conscientious and indefatigable

minister was for a time worn out by his excessive labors, and was compelled to seek, in foreign travel, a renewal of his powers of usefulness : — " Of the faithfulness of our friend, to this congregation I need not speak. He toiled day and night for the cause to which he had given himself, until, at length, he sunk under his labors. Of his connection with myself, let me say that it has never for a moment been disturbed by a word, I may add, by a thought, which friendship would wish to recall. Mutual confidence, a disposition in each to concede to the other unrestricted freedom of opinion and operation, and, I trust, a disposition to rejoice in one another's success, have given us the benefits of this relation, unmixed with the evils to which it is thought to be liable. I rejoice, my friends, in the proofs you have given our friend of your interest in his welfare, of your gratitude for his services. I rejoice in the testimony you have borne to the worth of the Christian ministry. Our friend will carry with him, wherever he goes, the consoling, cheering recollection of your sympathy and kindness. May he be followed by our prayers, as well as affections ! May he meet friends in strangers ! May a kind Providence infuse new life and strength into his debilitated frame ! May he return once again, to instruct, comfort, improve, and bless this congregation ! "

Throughout their long intercourse, from the time of his settlement to that of his death, Dr. Channing and the Federal Street Society vied with each other in liberality ; and, as the facts do honor to both parties and reveal interesting points of character, it seems but just to give some indications of the mutual respect and kindness which bound them together. The resignation of a portion of

his salary by Dr. Channing, as a means of better enabling the society to provide suitably for a colleague, has been noticed. But, from period to period, as he found that his friend's labors and responsibilities were multiplied, while his own were proportionately lessened, he gradually gave up the remainder of his salary, until the pecuniary tie between himself and his congregation became almost nominal. A few letters and votes, taken from the records of the Federal Street Society, illustrate the generous spirit upon both sides.

"My Christian Brethren: — Having reason to apprehend that I shall be obliged to diminish my exertions for a time, and feeling increased doubts as to the degree of service which I may be able to render hereafter, I have thought proper to relinquish five hundred dollars of my salary, after the present parish year, which will close with this month. I still hope to labor, and gradually to extend my labors among you, as a Christian minister. This object, however, requires that I should carefully abstain from every effort which may threaten any injury to my health, and I trust, that, in exercising my discretion on this point, I shall not be considered as consulting my ease rather than my usefulness, or as deserting those great interests to which my life has been devoted. I am happy to add, that I have found much relief and satisfaction in the zeal and cheerfulness with which my colleague has performed the duties which have multiplied upon him in consequence of my impaired health; and I pray that his connection with you may prove a continually increasing good.

"With Christian regards, I remain

"Your affectionate friend and pastor.

"*April 4th*, 1825."

"Reverend and dear Sir: — We duly received your

communication of the 4th instant; and we should immediately have acknowledged it, but for the hope we indulged that possibly a more speedy restoration to health and strength, than either your friends or yourself at that time anticipated, might afford us a reasonable ground for urging you to delay for the present a step which seems to loosen in some degree your connection with our society.

"It is with the most sincere pleasure we now learn that your disease has abated and that your strength is returning to you, and we therefore take the liberty of making the suggestion, whether it may not consist as well with your own views on this subject, and with the views and wishes of your friends and connections, that the relinquishment of salary proposed in your communication to us should be deferred, or at least confined to a limited time, until a few months' relaxation should enable you better to decide whether your health and comfort will render it impracticable for you to continue to perform so large a portion of the pastoral duties as you contemplated at the settlement of Mr. Gannett.

"We make this suggestion, dear Sir, with great diffidence, entertaining the highest respect for your own judgment, and that of your friends, on this subject, and feeling the most perfect conviction that nothing but absolute necessity would induce you to diminish your exertions in a cause to which you have hitherto devoted your life, and in which your labors have been so eminently beneficial to your fellow-beings. If you continue to be of opinion that the course already adopted is the most judicious one, we shall lay your communication before the proprietors at the annual meeting, which will be on the 4th day of May.

"With the most earnest prayers that your health may be completely restored and confirmed to you, we are, dear Sir,

"Your sincere friends and parishioners,

"JOHN LEE," &c.

*Boston*, April 19th, 1825.

Dr. Channing's letter was consequently withdrawn by him. In his note, he says: —

"I made the proposition to relinquish a part of my salary, in the belief that I was consulting my own usefulness and the welfare of the society. I am persuaded, however, that you understand what the interests of the parish demand better than I do; and if you apprehend that any injury will result from communicating my letter at the next parish meeting, or that greater good may be anticipated from withholding it, I am entirely willing that it should be passed over for the present.

"Your friend.

"*April 28th*, 1825."

"*To the Committee of the Religious Society in Federal Street.*

"GENTLEMEN: — I have thought fit to relinquish four hundred dollars of my salary from the commencement of the present parochial year, so that the salary will be twelve hundred, instead of sixteen hundred, per annum. My intention was to communicate this to you before the day of the annual meeting; but, through mistake, I have not done it. I have some views which I may lay before you at a future time, and can only add, that I remain, with the best wishes for yourselves and the society,

"Your sincere friend.

"*May* 2, 1827."

"DEAR SIR: — I believe that this is the evening on which the Committee of the Federal Street Church meet, and I will thank you to inform the gentlemen that it is my wish to relinquish two hundred dollars of my salary after this time. I presume that no objections now exist to such an arrangement.

"Very sincerely, your friend.

"*May* 4, 1829."

"DEAR SIR: — I believe that this is the evening on which the committee of our parish meet; and if so, I will thank you to express my desire that my salary may be reduced to the sum of eight hundred dollars, and that I may be released at the same time from the tax I pay for my pew.

"With sincere regard, your friend.

"*May* 3, 1830."

On May 5th, a vote was passed by the proprietors in accordance with his wish. The three deacons were appointed "a committee to wait upon Dr. Channing and to express the gratitude of the society to him for this act of liberality."

"DEAR SIR: — I learned from your letter yesterday that a meeting of the proprietors of our church is to be held to-day, to settle some of its pecuniary concerns. I will thank you to inform the meeting, that, as I was absent from the country half of the last year, it is my wish and purpose to relinquish one half of a year's salary.

"Very truly your friend.

"*October* 24, 1831."

October 24, it was voted unanimously, "That the clerk be directed to present the thanks of the proprietors to the Rev. Dr. Channing for his liberal offer, but respectfully to decline accepting it."

"*To the Members of the Congregational Society in Federal Street.*

"BOSTON, Nov. 1, 1832.

"MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS: — This day being the commencement of the last half of our parochial year, I have thought it a fit time for a communication which, perhaps, ought to have been made before. The uncertainty of my health and consequent uncertainty of my official services have *led me* to think that a change, in one respect, should be

made in the relation subsisting between us. It seems to me that my salary should cease; and, accordingly, I relinquish it from the present time. In taking this step, I have no desire to dissolve my pastoral connection with you. I wish to continue it, provided you shall believe, that, in so doing, I may promote your best interests. I still hope that I may recover strength for occasional preaching. To be wholly cut off from this means of usefulness would be to me a great affliction. I feel, however, more strongly than I have done, that I ought never to preach without a decided conviction that my health will not suffer from the effort; and I believe, that, in relinquishing my salary, my judgment on this point will be more unembarrassed than at present.

"I beg you to accept my thanks for the interest which you have so long taken in me and my labors. No one of you can feel more than I do how broken and imperfect my sermons have been. Under my infirmities, however, I have found comfort in knowing that you were enjoying the faithful and able labors of my colleague. It is my earnest desire and prayer, that the religion of Christ may be preached to you in its purity and with increasing success. This divine truth becomes more and more precious to me, under every new visitation of sickness and suffering. I can ask nothing better for my dearest friends than that they may know, by experience, its purifying influences and never-failing supports.

"With great affection and respect,

"Your friend and pastor.

"*Nov.* 1, 1832."

On November 19th, 1832, it was "*Voted*, That a committee of five persons be appointed to express the unabated respect and affection of the society to the Rev. Dr. Channing, and their grateful sense of his past services, and to request that he will continue to act as their

pastor on the same terms as at present, with the understanding that he shall not be expected to officiate, except when he can do it conveniently and with perfect safety to his health."

*" To the Committee of the Federal Street Society.*

" GENTLEMEN : — Allow me, through you, to offer to the members of our parish my grateful acknowledgments for the recent expressions of their regard. I will also thank you to inform them that I accede to the request contained in the vote passed at their late meeting. It is not necessary to state particularly the considerations which have led me to this result. I would only observe, that, from the communications which I have received, I am satisfied that the condition on which I offered my services would not be acceptable to them, and therefore I forbear to urge it. I desire, however, that one thing may be understood ; — if, at any time, the state of my health, or any other circumstances, should induce me to relinquish permanently, or for a season, a part of my salary, I ask that my wishes may take effect by being simply expressed to the standing committee ; and that no communication on my part to the society, and no deliberation of the society on the subject, may again be required. I fear that on this point I have already said more than its importance justifies; and I believe that I shall consult the feelings of my parishioners, as well as my own, by suggesting a mode of procedure which will render any future recurrence to it unnecessary.

" Accept my thanks for your friendly interest, and believe me, with sentiments of respect, your sincere friend.

" *Nov.* 24, 1832."

" DEAR SIR : — This day being the beginning of our parochial year, I will thank you to express to the committee of our society my desire, that, from this time, a reduction of two *hundred* dollars may be made in my annual salary. You

will probably recollect, that, according to my last letter to the society, this desire will take effect without being communicated to them for their concurrence.

"Very sincerely, your friend.

"*Philadelphia, May* 1, 1833."

"GENTLEMEN: — I will thank you to express, at some suitable time, to the members of our religious society, my purpose of relinquishing, at the end of the parochial year, the compensation which I now receive for my services. It is a deliberate act, and I beg them to acquiesce in it. I am not solicitous, however, to give up entirely my relation as one of their ministers, should they desire its continuance. My long connection with the society, the tender recollections which spring up when I look back on the many years devoted to the ministry among them, and the hope that I may still confer some benefit, however small, incline me to continue the relation as long as it shall seem to me not to interfere with higher means of usefulness. They will naturally expect that my labors among them will be diminished, and will not be surprised, if I should use the freedom which I shall enjoy in giving a somewhat different direction to my exertions in the cause of humanity and religion. It is my earnest prayer that their deliberations and efforts for securing to themselves and their children the means of religious improvement may be blessed by God, — that their union may be unbroken, — that they may be more and more established in Christian faith and virtue, — and that, under the merciful discipline of our Heavenly Father, we may all prepare ourselves for the indissoluble ties and everlasting happiness of the world to come.

"Your sincere friend.

"*Jan.* 9, 1838."

This letter was written because the Society in Federal Street was desirous of settling a colleague to aid Mr.

Gannett, at a period when he was very much enfeebled, and Dr. Channing considered the burden of three ministers altogether unnecessary. But as Mr. Gannett's health became restored, the plan was abandoned; and at the request of the society, Dr. Channing resumed his former relations. The series of these communications was closed by the two following letters, which seemed prophetically to announce the close of his earthly ministry: —

"*To the Standing Committee of the Proprietors of the Church in Federal Street.*

"GENTLEMEN: — This day being the beginning of our parochial year, I think it a fit season for a communication which I have for some time intended to make. I have, as you may recollect, proposed more than once to relinquish my salary, but have as often been requested by the society to retain it. The last request was communicated to me by the Hon. J. Davis and the Hon. J. Welles, with a kindness which I shall always remember with gratitude. I observed to them, that one reason for relinquishing the salary was, that by receiving it I should excite expectations which I might not be able to fulfil. But I was assured, that I was to consider myself as wholly free, and to preach only when it might be convenient. I have never lost the hope of being strengthened for greater public labors; but as yet it has not been realized. Under this experience, I have gradually reduced my salary, and have resolved definitely to relinquish it from this day. It is also my wish and purpose that all my public functions should cease. I do not desire, however, that a formal dissolution of our connection should take place. Having sustained the relation of pastor nearly forty years, it will be gratifying to me that it should continue, whilst circumstances remain as they are. I wish that the members of the society may feel that they have a right to

seek friendly and spiritual counsel from me, when in need of such, and that I may have a right to communicate with them, when I can hope to do them good. I beg, however, that it may be understood, that the prosperity of the society is far dearer to me than any personal gratification of this nature; and if it should be thought best that there should be a formal dissolution of the relation, I desire that this may immediately take place.

"In thus bringing my public labors among you to an end, I cannot but acknowledge with gratitude that kind Providence which has sustained me so many years amidst much physical infirmity, and which has made it the employment of my life to study and teach the religion of Jesus Christ. After a long experience, I feel that life could not have been devoted to a more worthy end. My time has been given chiefly to the work of acquiring juster, clearer, more quickening views of truth and duty. In this pursuit I have spent my strength, and cheerfully surrendered most of what are called the pleasures of life. That in so doing I have obeyed a Divine impulse, I believe; but I may have followed it too exclusively. The inquiries and contemplations which belong to my profession may have encroached on its more active duties. My studies, which would have been light to a man of ordinary strength, have produced almost daily an exhaustion which has left me little spirit for social intercourse. It might have been better for myself and for others, had I more frequently torn my mind from the subjects which have absorbed almost my whole intellectual energy. For this error, if such it be, I ask and hope a lenient judgment, because I have not given myself to intellectual indulgence, but have carried into my seclusion a sincere, and I hope a growing, interest in my fellow-creatures, and in the Christian cause. Other and more serious deficiencies I might recall. Indeed, no one can feel more than I do the imperfections of my ministry. For these I desire forgive-

ness of God and man. Still, I do not feel as if I had labored in vain. My public services have been listened to with interest, and I have had proofs, for which I am most grateful, that deeper effects than transient interest have been produced by my ministry. Not that I have accomplished what I wished. As a people, I fear, we are greatly wanting in that spiritual elevation, that superiority to the world, that love of God, of Jesus Christ, and of mankind, which is the end of religious institutions. In truth, all our churches need a new life, a new comprehension of the spirit and high purpose of Christianity. This I say for the truth's sake, and in sorrow of heart, and not from any wounded feelings under the consciousness of having exerted no greater influence. As far as I am personally concerned, I have nothing to complain of, no reproaches to utter. I have received for many years expressions of kindness, for which I offer my sincere thanks. It is, indeed, a gratifying consideration, that our long union has not been disturbed even by a word of contention. I am not aware that a thought or emotion of unkindness has risen within me towards one of my parishioners. Were I now to leave them, I could from the heart bid an affectionate farewell to *all*.

"I have spoken of the past. It is natural for me at such a moment to cast a look towards the future. It is possible that some sphere of action, not now anticipated, may open on me. It is more probable that my present sphere will be contracted. When I look round me, I see not one of the ministers who filled the pulpits of this city at my ordination. All have gone to their account; and not a few, settled since, have also passed away. He, who seemed destined to go among the first, survives alone. Can I help applying to myself the language of the Apostle, — 'The time of my departure is at hand'? Nor is the time very distant, when all to whom I have ministered will have entered the un*known* world. It is my fervent prayer that we may meet

in the temple 'not made with hands,' and that a holier worship than has united us here may bind us together for ever.

"I may on another occasion express my feelings more fully to the society. I earnestly desire that they may continue to enjoy the labors of their devoted pastor, and that, through this and other means of religion, their harmony may be perpetuated, and their spiritual improvement never cease.

"With respect and affection, your friend.

"*May* 1, 1840."

"*The Proprietors and Congregation of the Church in Berry Street to their Senior Pastor, the Reverend William Ellery Channing, D. D.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: — We have received from the standing committee of the proprietors the letter you addressed them on the first instant, announcing your purpose from that day to relinquish the small remainder of salary, which, at our earnest request, you had till then consented to receive from us; and expressing your desire, that, without formally dissolving the connection that has so long and so happily subsisted between us, your public functions as a minister of Christ to this society may cease.

"We do not wish to conceal from you that we receive this decision with regret and pain. Perhaps we feel it the more sensibly, because it seemed to be our duty to acquiesce in it, and thus make it final. For several years, we have known that you considered such a separation as you now propose desirable, on account of the state of your health; and if we have heretofore been unwilling to give it our concurrence, it has been from feelings of respect and attachment to yourself, that have grown old in many of our hearts, and sunk deep in all of them. We may, from these feelings, have resisted your wishes longer than we ought to have done, but we hope and trust we have not been un-

reasonable; and now that the time has arrived when we are not permitted to hesitate in giving to them our full assent, it gratifies us that you do not seek to make the separation absolute and entire, but that you are desirous on your part, as we are on ours, to retain some of the bonds that have united us during a connection that has been permitted to be so happy and to last so long.

"You allude to the possibility, that some inconvenience may hereafter arise to us from the continuance of these bonds. We anticipate none. We can imagine nothing but good from their continuance. Still, if, in the course of Providence, any inconvenience should be felt, we shall, in the spirit of frankness with which you have spoken of our union and its motives, avail ourselves of your permission to dissolve it, trusting, that, with the same frankness, you would claim the right you grant; and if it should at any time seem important or desirable to you to exercise it, that you would do so, and separate yourself from us wholly. We do not, however, suppose it at all likely that either party will take a step which we are sure neither would take but with great reluctance and from a strong sense of duty; and we allude to its possibility only because you have done so, and because we think it important that both should feel perfectly free to act in circumstances that cannot be foreseen.

"Our connection, as you intimate, has been continued through a longer period than could at first have been anticipated, — a period, indeed, so long, that few remain among us who bore witness to its beginning. You came to us thirty-seven years ago, when our numbers were so few, and our circumstances so humble, that it was apparent you came only from a sense of duty, and from a disinterested desire to serve your fellow-men. Under your care, however, we soon prospered and grew numerous. But at every step of our progress, we felt, that, under God's good providence, we owed it chiefly to you. We have, too, as we trust, been

thankful for the ministrations we have enjoyed. We have certainly felt them to be a privilege, — a great privilege, — and we have greatly valued them. Nor has their influence been confined to ourselves. They have been felt and acknowledged beyond the limits of our own society, beyond the limits of our own country; and we trust that even yet neither their work nor yours is wholly accomplished. We trust, that, long after both you and we are gone to render up our last account, your spirit, in the record of what you have here spoken, will be still active in the great cause of Christ and of human improvement, to which you have devoted your life. The only regret we feel, when looking back upon the period of your connection with us, is, that we have not profited as we ought to have done by the privileges we have enjoyed; that we have not become spiritual, and superior to the world, devoted to duty, as you have labored to make us. We pray God to forgive us for our deficiencies, and to make your teachings more effectual to the generations that are to come after us than they have been to us and to our own.

"We feel gratified by the suggestion, that your public labors may not wholly cease; and that you may not only speak again to us, but that it is possible you may become active in some other sphere of usefulness. Amidst whatever circumstances the course of God's providence may place you, we doubt not that your influence will be elevating and improving; and that we shall always witness and share its effects with thankfulness, seeking such personal and more immediate intercourse with you as our relative positions may permit and authorize, and looking to you, at all times, as to a Christian pastor and spiritual friend

"It is, we know, a satisfaction to you, as it is to us, that you do not leave us alone, but that we remain under the ministrations of the able and devoted pastor who has been so long associated with you. We pray, for your sake, as

well as for our own, that his health may be fully restored, and that his services, such as you have yourself been accustomed to witness and share them, may be yet many years continued to us and to our children. We can desire nothing better than such fidelity and devotedness as his, except a corresponding faithfulness on our own part to improve by them.

"In conclusion, we would invoke on you the blessings you have so often besought for us, adding, for the sake of the cause of Christianity and human improvement, our prayers that your strength and health may be increased, and that your faculties may be preserved unimpaired to a remote and happy old age.

"On behalf of the proprietors and the congregation of Berry Street Church,

"SAMUEL GREELE, *Chairman.*

"GEORGE S. HILLARD, *Proprietors' Clerk.*"

In proportion as the ties were gradually loosened which bound Dr. Channing to the Federal Street Society, and as his indefatigable colleague became, by well-earned influence, peculiarly the pastor of the congregation, he felt himself more free to devote his time and thoughts to larger interests of truth and philanthropy. In fact, for many years a change had been slowly taking place in his views of the relative importance of different branches of ministerial labor. In his early professional life, he had been, as we have seen, most devoted to his pastoral duties, and ill health, more than any other cause, had compelled him to limit his exertions in that direction. But experience, at length, suggested to him the question, whether his enforced life of secluded meditation had not, on the whole, been more serviceable to his fellow *men than* one of more constant social intercourse and

practical activity would have been. The course of his reflections may be partially indicated by giving the following extracts from one of his unfinished manuscripts: —

"The several duties of the minister may be laid down easily; but it is not so easy to establish the relative rank of his various offices. Some would make the minister a student, some a visiting pastor, some a public speaker. Undoubtedly, the same rule cannot be applied to all. Different modes of labor are appropriate to different men, and to different conditions of society. Still the great idea of the Christian minister is plain. He is to be a teacher; and, in order that he may teach, he must learn. His peculiar work is, to quicken the community by the promulgation of exalting truth. The acquisition of this truth, and the clear, powerful expression of it, are, then, his chief labors; and these imply much solitary thought. He is to be a thinker. To this severe toil his life is to be mainly given. Of course, he is to preach, converse, counsel. But the sermon which he preaches in an hour may be the result of months and years of meditation. The truth which he utters in a sentence may have cost him long, laborious, exhausting research. If, indeed, a minister is satisfied to retail the views with which he commenced his professional career, — if he can bear to preach over and over his first sermons, — he need pass but little time in his secluded study. But such a man is unfit for his profession. No one is worthy to be a minister of God, who does not earnestly aspire to leave beneath him the crude conceptions and errors of his early years, and to ascend into purer, brighter, serener realms of thought. Only private meditation can lead him up to worthy conceptions of the great realities of the spiritual life. His chief work he must do alone. He must live much in his study, and live there, not as a hypocrite and cheat, amusing himself with light reading, whilst the world considers him a student, but in good

faith, tasking his powers for the discovery and forcible exhibition of truth. The study is too often an idle place, and yet a faithful student is the most laborious man on earth. These views are important, because the age is so much an out-door age. There is little solitary thought anywhere.

"Great stress is laid upon what is sometimes called pastoral duty, on the personal intercourse, that is to say, of the minister with his congregation; but much visiting may be to a minister, as to others, a species of dissipation. Profitable conversation is a fruit of meditation, the overflow of a full heart and mind. To do good, as he goes from house to house, a minister should carry with him living thoughts, which have been matured by vigorous inquiry, which belong to a system of truth for ever enlarging and gaining strength in his mind. No one believes more than I do in the benefits of free conference between the minister and his parishioners; but their intercourse should be truly a conference, — the suggestion of awakening ideas, which open the inward experience. Such conversation requires, above all things, that a minister should rid himself of the technicalities and formal restraints of his profession, and exchange mere traditional notions of religion for fresh, clear, profound views. Where a minister does not lead a life of thought, it is to be feared, that, as a visitor, he will become a gossip; and a religious gossip is no more profitable than any other. To tell religious news may do in its season and place; but to fill up any considerable portion of life with it is a sad waste of power, and a minister should respect his function too highly to spend his hours in such enfeebling talk.

"It is sometimes said, that a minister does more by winning the love of his people than by hard study, because he thus secures an access to their hearts, which no mere intellectual power could give. A minister should, indeed, be loved; but this sentiment should be a moral, rather than a personal sentiment. It should be a respect for his high virtues,

a trust in his uncompromising fidelity, a grateful sense of his devoted, conscientious labors for a glorious end, more than an attachment growing out of private sympathies. Respectful confidence, founded on the recognition of consistent principle, is better than affection. The minister must beware of an intercourse with his congregation which flatters their self-love and endears him as a partial friend. The sympathetic minister may fail to be the faithful spiritual guide. The only sure ground for a man to stand upon is elevation and purity of character. Popularity, founded on individual sympathies, has no certain permanence.

"It is said, that, in proportion as a minister is loved, he is heard with profit. Is this so? Are the most amiable ministers, who are ever welcome companions, generally found to be the most efficient? Many men promote social kindness, and keep up a good understanding among their hearers, who touch no deep spring, give no powerful impulse. Love of the teacher is, at the best, but a tottering foundation for religious principle. Truth should be heard, not for the sake of him who utters it, but in its own right. It should come to men in its own majestic authority, and not under the patronage of a beloved preacher. The minister who serves us is he who aids us to gain convictions which will endure when the very remembrance of him shall have passed away,—principles upon which we may build for ever. The kind of attachment which makes a people acquiesce without inquiry in his opinions is the last which a minister should desire. He should wish his hearers to love truth infinitely better than they do him. Candid, earnest, deliberate, respectful attention to his views is the utmost he should look for.

"There are peculiar dangers which attend the minister who wishes to make himself useful by being loved. The very effort to win affection is a hazardous one; it may injure simplicity of character, and mingle calculation with the desire of doing good, till natural, genuine, spontaneous sym-

pathy is vitiated and impaired. There is a temptation, too, to stoop from the true dignity of the ministerial office by a dread of giving offence or causing pain. No quality is more needed in the Christian minister than moral independence. Fidelity to his convictions is infinitely more important than winning manners. His highest work is, not to echo public opinion, but to bear testimony to great principles which do not exert their rightful sway over men's minds, — to teach what those around him fail in, or are slow to recognize, — to oppose more earnestly what is unchristian in proportion as it is confirmed by tradition, prejudice, usage. Hostility to prevalent evils is the true position for the minister. This calm, determined, unwavering loyalty to truth finds a snare in the fear of breaking the ties of friendship. Thus the minister, in aiming to gain attachment, may sacrifice true honor.

"There is great danger in seeking influence. How many, for fear of sacrificing it, do little or nothing! In order to keep it, they refuse to exert it, and thus make it useless. The truest influence comes unsought. The best way of gaining it is to act without calculation or solicitude, according to our clearest convictions, and to leave our lives to speak for themselves. Of course, we shall often be misrepresented; but, in the long run, the true principles from which a man acts become plain. Confidence in us will be sooner or later established, if we are faithful to the right. A young minister sometimes receives a confidence which he has not earned, and, consequently, is compelled to pass through an after season of neglect. He retains only the influence which he has honestly earned by the exercise of his best powers. Patient fidelity in seeking truth may win him firmer friends than much visiting. An invigorated intellect and a disciplined spirit make themselves silently felt, and command a respect which is enduring.

"These remarks are the more important, because, in this *country*, the dependence of the minister on the good-will of

his congregation strongly tempts him to make himself agreeable to his hearers. If he yield to this temptation, he is lost. If the desire of pleasing takes the place of aspiration after truth, the dignity of his mind is gone. We never should enter into communion with our fellow-men with the view of being agreeable as our chief end. We enter no circle without taking the chance of encountering opinions and feelings which we ought not to reciprocate, or of being called to utter what may give pain or offence. Our first purpose should be, to hold fast to truth and justice, however we may fail of sympathy; and this is especially the duty of the minister, whose great function is to bear witness to the truth. The minister is only degraded by his profession, if he seeks transitory approbation by accommodating truth to men's passions and prejudices. The whole power of his office lies in his moral self-subsistence; yet he is tempted to veer with every change of popular opinion. Let him therefore live much by himself, that he may learn to stand firm among his fellow-men; let him dwell habitually in the region of everlasting truths, that he may not be the sport of the caprices of the day.

"It will not, of course, be supposed that by these remarks it is meant that a minister is to be unsocial, repulsive, unconciliating, severe. He should not make his study a dungeon, or solitary cell, where his affections become blighted. He is to leave it, bound by new ties to his race through the great truths upon which he has there meditated. Let him come forth to share in all the innocent joy of his fellow-creatures, with a heart widely open to whatever is beautiful around him,—to the loveliness of childhood, the buoyant spirits of youth, the graces and excellences of mature life, the venerableness of age. Let him express simply the real interest he takes in those for whose highest good he lives; and he may thus find that the overflow of his spontaneous feelings will win him as much true, deep love, as if he were to devote the *most of his time* to social intercourse."

It must by no means be understood, from these extracts, that Dr. Channing held pastoral duties in low esteem. He considered them secondary in importance, indeed, to the pursuit of truth and spiritual culture, but still of high obligation. To a friend he wrote, —

"I think your influence over your people will be exceedingly diminished, if you have no private intercourse with them. I doubt whether a minister can preach as he ought, can write such sermons as a people need, if he never sees them but on Sunday."

The thoughts expressed in the foregoing extracts do embody, however, though in a hasty and imperfect manner, Dr. Channing's views of his own special duties as a minister. This will appear from the following letter: —

"*Jan.* 23, 1828.* A hoarseness has closed my mouth for two Sundays, and I know not when liberty of speech will be given me. Happily, the spirit is free, and I try to turn my solitude to some account. I have been refreshed to-day by a visit from our friend Tuckerman, who seems to be, and is, happier in visiting the hovels of the poor, than any spoiled child of fortune in haunting the saloons of taste, rank, and wealth. He enjoys his poor, and I enjoy his power of virtue in extracting from such materials such rare happiness. Thus virtue is a spreading good indeed. Next to my own function, I am tempted to think his the best.

"And what is my function? Striving humbly, and not impatiently striving, to penetrate the clouds which encompass us, and to catch some new glimpses of the Uncreated Light, the Infinite Beauty, the Perfection of the Parent Mind, and of the Human Soul; and through this to understand my-

* To Orville Dewey, D. D.

self and other beings, — to turn all things to their true and noblest ends. What I have lately published was meant to be a trial of the sympathy which I might hope for.

"When I told you that my last sermon had not answered my hopes, I did not mean to say that it had not been talked of enough, but that it had not excited the *kind* of interest which I have wished. Still I do not complain, or for a moment waver in my hope. I blame as much, to say the least, the imperfection of the writer, as the want of susceptibility in the readers. I believe that the seed has been sown in some minds where it will take root, and this fully satisfies and recompenses me. But there has been no general response to the sentiments, or rather, a general indifference; so that to hear even of a few to whom they are living truths is a great encouragement; and my friends do me good, when they let me know of such cases. My own opinion of the value of what I publish is not at all affected by the general reception it meets with; but if no souls are reached, there is cause of distrust."

The rare blending of conscientiousness and humility, independence and self-distrust, firm faith and aspiration, so simply manifested in this estimate of his intellectual function, pervaded the writer's character, and determined the course of his literary life. Without the addition of a word of comment, the following series of letters will open to the reader the hidden springs of Dr. Channing's conduct as an author, and reveal, as no description could, the pure disinterestedness by which he was animated.

"*May* 14, 1842.* It is not unfrequent for an author to be praised, even admired, whilst he feels that the view of his work most interesting to himself has been seized by very

* To Ferris Pell, Esq.

few of his hearers. He is praised, but not understood. I remember a minister who, on being deprived of a particular hearer, expressed great sorrow; 'For,' said he, 'I always felt, when he was present, that one of the congregation understood me.' I have had some sad proofs of the obtuseness of too many of my readers, in the kind of criticism passed on me. Some people have groaned at my *deserting* my profession, and becoming a *politician*. Some wise ones even intimated that I had an eye on a seat in Congress! Things of this kind do not discourage me, but show what a darkness surrounds us on every side. I thank you for understanding me. Not that you are the only discerner of my spirit; others have done me the same favor; and, indeed, I am persuaded that there is an increasing tendency to see the application of moral and religious truths, of the highest principles of Christianity, to political affairs, to the relations of nations, and to all civil and social arrangements and institutions.

"As to what you say of my profession, it is but too true. Still, ministers must not be judged too hardly. There is much truth in the old proverb, 'Like people, like priest.' The two act on one another, and carry on the work of mutual assimilation; and we must not wonder if the people, being the immense majority, should act to most effect. Unhappily, both start with the notion that the priest is not a man, — that his holiness is something *professional*, not *human*, — that he is to be good for the sake of his office, and in the way which his office prescribes. He is to keep apart from men, from common life, to be 'religious,' which means something different from being perfect in spirit and life, perfect in common matters and every-day relations. The erroneous views which doomed the Catholic clergy to celibacy are far from being banished from Protestantism. The minister is too holy for business or politics. He is to preach creeds *and* abstractions. He may preach ascetic notions about

pleasures and amusements; for his official holiness has a tinge of asceticism in it, and people hear patiently what it is understood they will not practise. But if he 'come down,' as it is called, from these heights, and assail in sober earnest deep-rooted abuses, respectable vices, inhuman institutions or arrangements, and unjust means of gain, which interest, pride, and habit have made dear, and next to universal, the people who exact from him official holiness are shocked, offended. 'He forgets his sphere.' Not only the people, but his brother-ministers, are apt to think this; and they do so not mainly from a timeserving spirit, not from dread of offending the people, — though this motive too often operates, — but chiefly from false notions about the ministry, its comprehensive purpose, its true spirit, which is an all-embracing humanity. Ministers in general are narrow-minded and superstitious, rather than servile. Their faults are those of the times, and they are more free from these, perhaps, than most of the people. And are they not becoming less and less ministers, and more and more men?"

"*Boston*, July 21, 1828.* DEAR SIR: — Your letter gave me great pleasure. Many of your expressions of approbation I am compelled, by my self-knowledge, to limit, perhaps I should say, to disclaim. But, whilst I question the soundness of the estimate which many make of my labors, I do not the less rejoice in the proofs which occasionally come to me, that what I have written has been quickening and exalting to some of my fellow-beings. I have a deep conviction that Christianity was intended to communicate energy and elevation far beyond what we yet witness, and that our nature was made, and is fitted, for the sublimest influences of this religion. If I have helped to spread this conviction, — if I have awakened in any soul a consciousness of its powers and

* To the Rev. George Armstrong.

greatness, — if I have thrown any light on the grandeur of God's purposes towards his rational creatures, — if I have done any thing to expose the monstrous error, that curbs and chains are the indispensable and best means of educating the individual and the race, — or if I have vindicated for the mind that freedom which is the chief element and condition of its growth, then I have accomplished the end to which I have devoted my powers.

"I thank you most sincerely for encouraging me to hope that I have not been wholly unsuccessful. I feel my poor labors — for I cannot estimate them very highly — recompensed beyond measure by such language as you have used. You have given me a kind of approbation which I may enjoy without injury to my virtue, for your letter breathes sympathy much more than it expresses praise. I thank you, and I thank God, for this. Truth, though not responded to, is still truth; but how are we strengthened and encouraged, when, having sent it abroad, it comes back to us in tones which show that it has penetrated the inmost souls of some, at least, who have heard it!"

"*August* 27, 1828.* Your letters do not make me vain, but thankful, by assuring me that I am not living for nothing, — that I even give strength and elevation to minds like yours. I am so tempted to think lightly of whatever I send forth, that I need such testimonies to sustain my courage."

"*Boston*, March 30, 1829.† My dear Mrs. Baillie: — I thank you from the heart for your letter. Expressions of interest in my writings, from the enlightened and virtuous, are a recompense for which I cannot be sufficiently grateful to Providence, and which I need as an encouragement. I am naturally inclined to self-distrust. I do not know that my case is singular; but, whilst I have the deepest convic-

* *To Mrs.* Felicia Hemans. † To Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

tion of the truth and greatness of my leading views, and look to them as powerful means of quickening and elevating the human mind, I am so dissatisfied with my expression of them, that I sometimes hesitate about sending my writings to my friends, after they have gone through the press. My principal encouragement is, that the truths which I have published seem to have found their way to the hearts of some young men of fine powers and a noble spirit, who, as I trust, are to do much more than myself. I have for many years had a deep feeling of the present degraded state of moral and religious science. My desire and hope has been, to awaken in others the want of something purer and more ennobling. My success has certainly exceeded my expectation, but has done little to remove the consciousness of deficiency. I have written this that you may understand the good which has been done me by sympathy on your side of the ocean."

"*Boston*, March 30, 1829.* Great public favor is a great snare. We are in danger of an excessive sensitiveness to reputation, and of losing, through this blighting selfishness, the very loftiness of spirit through which reputation is to be preserved. I wonder if one cause of the decline of great reputations be not the tendency of fame to distract and narrow the mind, by the selfish elations and the selfish anxieties which it alternately engenders. I feel these to be the perils of authorship in my own case. I want approbation, for I am by nature self-distrusting; and yet I am not sure that the little simplicity and disinterestedness which I may possess are at all aided by it. In truth, life is throughout a trial, and wisely made such; for through trial moral power is called forth, and our dependence on a higher power strengthened. We aim to do good; and the very good which we do may, by a selfish reference, become to ourselves an evil. We would lay open whatever is pure and elevated in our own

* To Mrs. Felicia Hemans.

spirits, that others may commune with and participate in it; and the very sympathy of others may make us idols to ourselves, and render us unworthy of it."

"*Boston*, June 8th, 1830.* You needed no apology for writing to me. Believe me, I have fewer gratifications than the proofs which are occasionally afforded me of an interest taken by intelligent and distant strangers in what I have published. The voice of sympathy coming to me across the ocean is most welcome. It gives me reason to hope that I have reached and set forth some great, everlasting, universal truths. This recompense is the most delightful, because unlooked for, and would give me unmixed pleasure, could I escape from the consciousness that it is disproportioned to my efforts. It is true, that I have aimed, as you say, to promote the spirit of Individuality. It grieves me to hear the multitude repeating perpetually the deafening cries and watchwords of party. It grieves me that so few speak from personal conviction, that men despair of doing any thing except by banding together in sects, and that even truth has caught a sectarian tone. Your letter was gratifying to me, by the freedom with which you dissented from some of my opinions. I differ so often from myself, that commendation which comes to me without some qualification wants one mark of value."

"*Boston*, March 8th, 1833.† My Dear Sir: — I smiled a little at your solicitude about the reception your article would find with me. It will be relieved, when I tell you that I have not read it.‡ You will not infer from this that you have been neglected. I have felt, for some time, that the less I read about myself the better. The most laudatory

* To Miss Emily Taylor, New Buckenham.

† To Orville Dewey, D. D.

‡ *Review* of his writings, in the Christian Examiner.

article on my writings ever published, as I suppose, appeared in the Westminster Review, two or three years ago, and I did not read it, though the number containing it was more than once in my hands. The vindication of me, in the North American, from Hazlitt's abuse in the Edinburgh, I have never read. I am always gratified by a few lines in a letter or newspaper, showing me that my writings are spreading, and are producing their effects on one and another mind. I read such notices now and then; for my tendency is to discouragement, to depressing views of whatever I do. None are more grateful for a word of heartfelt approbation; but I can dispense with any thing more. So much for my interest in laudatory criticisms. As to those which expose my defects, I am glad to receive them from fair-minded men. Accordingly, I desired ———, when reading your article, to extract the fault-finding passages; and you can judge how they affected me, when I tell you, that, on finishing the extracts, I asked, 'Is this all?'

"You say something of the policy of finding fault, as a proof of impartiality. I reply, — without the slightest reference to my own case, — that here, as elsewhere, *policy* and *truth* are one. The mischief done by seeming to give up an able advocate of a cause to the violence of its opponents outweighs all the benefits of a calculating impartiality. Nothing injures a cause more than the appearance of weakness in its friends; and whilst this is no reason for assuming, as is so common, an over-confident tone, it is a reason for not yielding an inch of ground, beyond what truth demands, to our adversaries. In what I have said above, as to my not reading much which is written about myself, I have given you a piece of secret history, known to no other person; and which I wish not to be known, because I should be sorry that my eulogists should think me ungrateful, because I earnestly desire such favorable notices as will spread my works, because the true state of my mind on the subject could not be

understood, and because, in my progress, I may come to find benefit in what I do not read now."

"*Boston*, May 5, 1834.* The truth is, I have been an author by accident, not by profession or of set purpose. Most that I have published was written without a thought of publication, and nothing was written to appear in my own name; so that I have not been exposed, in a great degree, to the sensitiveness which cleaves to authorship. I never could attach much importance to these almost fortuitous productions. The truths which I have insisted on seem to me, indeed, infinitely important, — more so than to any body else. But I am conscious of having done no justice to them; so that I am little disposed to blame those who differ from me."

"*Boston*, Jan. 19th, 1835.† As to the interest you take in my writings, I can only say to you, what I have often said, that the reception they have met with surprises me. I had no expectation of the effect they have produced. I am not, on this account, less grateful for the good which I trust they are doing, and I have encouragements to labor, without which my life would be less active and happy.

"I do not wonder that you have discovered inconsistencies in my last volume.‡ When I engaged to publish it, I intended to rewrite all the sermons; but I was able to do this only in the case of the first, and the rest were printed very much as they were delivered, and not one had been composed with care."

"*March*, 1836.§ I was a little surprised by your application in behalf of a good duchess in the heart of Germany.

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

† To the Rev. George Armstrong.

‡ The second volume of his Sermons.

§ *To* Geo. Ticknor, Esq., Dresden, Saxony.

I did not suppose that my name had ever been heard in that country, and I can hardly conceive of my finding much favor among a people of such different habits of thought, and whose learned men and men of genius leave me so very, very far behind. However, I will send my books with pleasure. I know they contain some great truths, written, not from tradition, but from deep conviction, from the depths of my soul, — may I not say, from inspiration? I mean nothing miraculous; — does not God speak in us all? No one does, or can, see the imperfections of what I have written as I do myself. But in the 'earthen vessel' there is still a heavenly 'treasure.' Of this I am sure. I will therefore send my books, with all their imperfections, to the duchess. They contain principles which it would be well for dukes and duchesses to learn, all the world over; and who knows but that I may give to one in high station a new sympathy with his or her fellow-creatures, a new reverence for humanity, a new perception of the nothingness of the outward compared with the inward? I live in hope; for is it not the will of God that *all men* shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth?"

"William E. Channing respectfully requests the Duchess of —— to accept the books now forwarded. He has understood from an American friend residing at Dresden, who has communicated with Count ——, that the duchess had expressed a desire to see his writings, and he trusts that she will do him the honor to accept from him such as he can now collect. No one can be more aware than himself of the imperfect manner in which he has unfolded his views; but, having entire and joyful faith in the great and life-giving truths which he feels himself called to teach, he takes pleasure in sending his writings to any who may be disposed to read them, and especially to those whose high station gives them peculiar influence over the minds of their fellow-beings.

He begs the Duchess of —— to accept his assurances of respect and his sincere wishes for her happiness."

"William E. Channing respectfully asks the Duchess of —— to accept an address delivered by him on a subject which has excited great interest and much philanthropic exertion in his own country. Thanks to God, these efforts have been crowned with wonderful success. It is true, we have yet a fearful amount of intemperance in the United States of America; but the change produced in the habits of society is most beneficial. No attempt at moral reform, in this age of benevolent enthusiasm, has been so successful. To the philanthropist, it is a most encouraging thought, that the vice which has been thought more hopeless than any other, and which does more than all others to degrade the laboring classes, that is, the majority of mankind, may be arrested by benevolent effort. We learn, that, in Sweden and Denmark, temperance societies, similar to ours, are fostered by government. We of republican America, who look on less popular institutions with jealousy, do yet rejoice when we find sovereigns thus becoming the parents of their people. It will be seen, in this address, how gladly we welcome good reports of the progress of education in Germany. A new impulse is already given, from that country, to education in America. The most interesting feature in our age is a calm, deliberate faith in the capability of human progress. Thus the friends of humanity are exerting a wider influence than they hoped.

"The author received with much sensibility the note in which the duchess acknowledges the receipt of the volumes forwarded by him. He cannot be indifferent to expressions of approbation from persons of distinguished rank, but he would be unjust to himself, were he not to say that his great pleasure on such occasions arises from the hope that he may do something towards strengthening, in those whom God has *clothed* with great power, an interest in the cause of humanity, *in* the improvement and happiness of their race."

"*Sept.* 18, 1839.* MY DEAR SIR: — I cannot deny myself the pleasure of thanking you for your Rhymed Plea for Tolerance. The poem was already in my library, but I am glad to add a copy from the hand of the author. Some have hoped that the fiend of intolerance was expelled for ever from the more enlightened parts of Christendom; but new cases of possession seem to multiply, and I welcome every friend of humanity and freedom who will undertake the part of exorcist.

"As to the 'review' of my writings which you refer to, I do not need much solace under it. I wish I could ascribe my indifference about such matters to philosophy or religion. I suppose it has grown, in part, out of my exposure for years to like attacks. But there is a deeper cause. My nature inclines me to keep out of the world, and to interest myself in subjects more than in persons. This tendency I have to resist, as injurious to the affections and to Christian sympathy. But one effect of it is, that what is said of me makes little or no impression. Indeed, I forget it in a few days. There are some who can 'forgive, but not forget.' The difficulty with me is, that I cannot forgive, because I so soon forget. I have so many subjects more interesting than my opponent, that he is crowded out of mind. In all this there is no virtue, but much comfort.

"I might complain of my reviewer, that he has seized on my first work, instead of the last. I have not read my remarks on Milton for many years; but I can easily believe that they furnish proofs enough of bad taste. I seem to myself to have gained a good deal, in the power of expression, by time and use. My last Letter on Slavery, I believe, is written with a good deal more of freedom and purity than my earlier productions. However, I will not complain. An adversary must be expected to aim at the weakest side; and

* To John Kenyon, Esq., London.

perhaps I ought to feel that there is something of a compliment paid me, when such a man as ——— can think me so dangerous to the republic of letters as to need the resistance of his veteran arm. To be serious, reviews trouble me only on one account. They may deter some from giving attention to what seem to me great truths. I do think that I have said what deserves to be weighed. No one can be more sensible than I am of the imperfect way in which I have said it."

"*Newport*, June 15, 1841.* Perhaps you are not aware how entirely I have abstained from all efforts to give circulation to my writings. I never solicited, however indirectly, any aid in making them known. As a general rule, I have not read the reviews of them. Not that I have been indifferent to their success, but because I have felt that the less I thought about them, when once given to the world, the better."

"*Boston*, Aug. 29, 1841.† I am much cheered and strengthened by learning that my testimony to truth has not been in vain, that it is responded to by inquiring and serious minds at a distance, that I am doing something for the cause of God and man. We all of us need encouragement. I certainly do. My natural tendency is, to ascribe little importance to what I do; and I should have written very little, without expressions of sympathy. I should have prized the truth which I hold as I do now, but I should have questioned my own power of setting it forth to any effect. You have done me good. I thank you for your encouraging words. Still more I thank God, who strengthens me to speak to the souls of my fellow-creatures."

It thus appears how incidentally Dr. Channing entered

* To George G. Channing, Esq. † To Wm. Trevilcock, Esq.

the sphere of literature. The *ethical* element was the predominant one in his nature; and although his love of beauty was too strong, independent of overmastering enthusiasm, ever to have permitted him to be a mere dilettante, it was not so active as to make him dissatisfied, until he had concentrated into a symmetric work of art his thought and emotion. He was too earnest as a prophet, to waste hours, which were only too swift in their flight for one so feeble, upon giving form to the inspiring truth which he knew he was called to communicate. Fully aware, as he was, too, that he had attained but to glimpses of most glorious realities, he could not be so presumptuous and irreverent as to attach an unreal value to what he humbly regarded as fragmentary suggestions; and the conceptions struggling within him, over which he delightedly brooded, in meditative days and wakeful nights, were so sweet and majestic, that any portraiture of them would have seemed incomplete and unfinished. He could give, at the best, but a sketch of his meaning, like a child's rough outline of some statue or landscape. His chief care, therefore, was, to be true; and he left his expression to take its hue and shape spontaneously. A glance at his manuscripts shows how unlabored was his style. The corrections are, for the most part, erasures; and, where words are exchanged for others, in all cases, it is by substitution of a simple phrase for a composite one. Systematically, from even early years, he disciplined his fancy to severe soberness; though any one who knew him intimately could not but see how richly stored were his galleries of thought with exquisite natural images. He feared that the sense of the hearer or reader would be lured from the aspect of truth to the splendor of her robes by the use of meta-

phor, and so habitually checked his instinctive propensity to present laws and principles by the medium of symbols. His effort was, to utter himself plainly. The exercise of imagination, also, he restrained, limiting its sphere to giving a fresh and vigorous embodiment to his ideas in the most obvious form, though he was apt and able for original creation, if he had seen it to be a befitting work. The very play of the affections he subdued, and constantly sought for a calm, attempered, equable tone of statement, though his fervent will necessarily infused a glow of eloquence through the whole texture of his composition. And, finally, he would not allow himself to be abstract or scientific in his method or vocabulary, for fear that the public would be deterred from listening to, or prevented from apprehending, the divine thoughts which he was empowered to teach, unless won to attention by a familiar mode of treatment. In a word, he saw an immediate duty to be done, which was, to rouse his lethargic fellow-beings to a consciousness of the grandeur of man's spiritual existence, and he resolutely consecrated himself, by iteration and reiteration of one sublime lesson, now breathed softly in whispers, now rung out like an alarum, to break the dream of the world and to summon the multitude to the labors and joys of a brightening morning.

The history of his various publications confirms this view of Dr. Channing as a literary man. He became an author unawares. When the "Anthology Club" commenced the course of labors which did so much to give an impulse to the intellect of New England, he was invited to be a contributor to their journal; and, in consequence, he communicated to its pages two or three essays, a few fragmentary thoughts, and one or more short pieces in verse, which were probably the only at-

tempts he ever made at poetical composition. But he could not enter cordially into what he felt to be, for himself, at least, but "busy idleness." His work was to preach. As great political occasions called from him sermons which contained declarations of sentiment and opinion adapted to the wants of the times, he reluctantly yielded to the demand for their publication, and allowed them to be printed, as first written, with scarcely a verbal amendment. In the Christian Disciple, he sought to do what he might to pour oil upon the stormy waves which were then swelling beneath the tempest of controversy; and only when he could in conscience no longer keep silence, addressed to his fellow-Christians his remonstrance against spiritual despotism, in his letters to Mr. Thacher and Dr. Worcester. Thus, in the first era of his ministry, it is seen how accidentally he found himself summoned from his quiet study and round of parish duties, to modes of address for which he felt no taste. And in the last era of his life, until within a very few years before his death, he had the same disinclination to make any special call upon the attention of his fellow-men. Apart from the restraints of his native modesty, and the influence of his lofty ideal, measured by whose standard most of the literature of the age appeared tame and frivolous, he was so eager to climb to serener heights, that it satisfied him to send forth a cheering cry to brethren struggling upwards through the shadows, as prospects of beauty opened amidst the fog. His publications were still occasional addresses, drawn from him by request. Friends urged him continually to embody his thoughts in a more permanent form, to which he replied, that they were not quite ripe. And when besought at least to revise, select, and print in a volume

what he had already given to the public, he could not be prevailed upon to think it of sufficient importance to authorize his expending on such a work hours which he felt bound to consecrate to progressive inquiry.

At length the desire to aid in giving a higher tone and securing a wider sphere of influence to the Christian Disciple, which in 1824 was enlarged, and took a new form under the name of the Christian Examiner, drew from him some essays, which attained a most unlooked-for celebrity, and made him universally known in the world of letters. The attention excited by these papers was a great surprise to him, and he always considered the estimate placed upon them by the public exaggerated. To redeem his promise of communicating an impulse to the review which was the special organ of Liberal Christianity, and to set an example of a bold, free, manly treatment of great subjects, in literature, politics, education, science, &c., he poured out, with his usual rapidity of composition, trains of thought, which at all times interested him, and which were freshly recalled by the successive appearance of Milton's "Christian Doctrine," Scott's "Life of Bonaparte," and "Selections from Fénelon"; but his chief aim was, to awaken his own immediate circle of believers to a more comprehensive, cordial, direct application of religion to life. The themes, however, were most interesting to him, and the very spontaneousness with which he expressed himself was favorable to the true manifestation of his character and mind. These hasty effusions, which, considered as literary models, he valued but little, let a sympathizing reader very deeply into the essential spirit of the man. His tender sensibility, delicacy of taste, chivalric heroism, loyal love of truth, high integrity, expansiveness, aspiration, pervade the no-

tice of the sublime poet and stern republican. His profound veneration for man, grand estimate of the end and method of life, and devout confidence in God's infinite purposes of benignity to his human family, give to his searching analysis of the springs of action in the military despot an awful sincerity; and as the culprit is brought before the piercing eyes of the congregated spiritual world, stripped of the tinsel rags of false glory, pity prompts the reader to recall every good trait and deed, as a mantle to cover his shame. The uncompromising conscience of the writer here appears with the grave, firm aspect of an impartial judge upon the bench. The methodical habit of his mind is also shown, in the manner in which he passes from the condemnation of lawless power in an individual instance to the discussion of the rightful function and scope of government, closing with an unreserved expression of reverence for the judiciary. The second part of the essay on Bonaparte — it may be said, in passing — was written with more care, probably, than any of the occasional pieces of that period. It is in the notice of Fénelon, however, that what was most characteristic of Dr. Channing appeared. In countless little strokes and touches throughout that paper, he sketched his own likeness with a fidelity which no second hand will ever rival; and the almost angelic ideal of piety there given was an unconscious portrait of the beauty of his own holiness.

Soon after the publication of these essays in the Examiner, the desire to aid a friend induced Dr. Channing to collect and revise what he thought worth preserving in his past writings, — a private feeling of kindness presenting a motive, which sense of duty as an author did not supply. And thus the volume of Miscellanies came to

be printed in 1830. In the Preface to the first edition, he thus indicates his own estimate of his literary labors.

"The reader cannot be more aware than I am, that these various tracts, called forth by particular occasions, and never intended to appear in their present form, need many and great changes; but they probably would never have been republished, had I waited for leisure to conform them to my ideas of what they should be, or to make them more worthy of the unexpected favor which they have received. They were written to meet the wants of the times, and to place what I deem great truths within reach of the multitude of men. If the reader will bear this in mind, some defects will more readily be excused. The second Review in particular should be referred to the date of its original publication. . . . . .

"I esteem it a privilege that my writings have called forth many strictures and been subjected to an unsparing criticism. I know that in some things I must have erred. I cannot hope, that, even in my most successful efforts, I have done full justice to any great truth. Deeply conscious of my fallibleness, I wish none of my opinions to be taken on trust, nor would I screen any from the most rigorous examination. If my opponents have exposed my errors, I owe them a great debt; and should I fail, through the force of prejudice, to see and acknowledge my obligation to them in this life, I hope to do so in the future world.

"I have declined answering attacks made on my writings, not from contempt of my opponents, among whom are men of distinguished ability and acknowledged virtue, but because I believed that I should do myself and others more good by seeking higher and wider views, than by defending what I had already offered. I feared that my mind might become stationary by lingering round my own

writings. I never doubted, that, if any thing in these were worthy to live, it would survive all assaults, and I was not anxious to uphold for a moment what was doomed, by its want of vital energy, to pass away. . . . . .

"Very possibly this volume may seem to want consistency. I have long been conscious that we are in more danger of being enslaved to our own opinions, especially to such as we have expressed and defended, than to those of any other person; and I have accordingly desired to write without any reference to my previous publications, or without any anxiety to accommodate my present to my past views. In treatises prepared in this spirit and at distant intervals, some incongruity of thought and feeling can hardly fail to occur.

"An opposite objection may be urged, that the volume has too much repetition. This could not well be avoided in articles written on similar topics and occasions, — written, too, without any reference to each other, and in expectation that each would be read by many into whose hands the others would not probably fall. I must add, that my interest in certain great truths has made me anxious to avail myself of every opportunity to enforce them; nor do I feel as if they were urged more frequently than their importance demands.

"I will only say, in conclusion, that, whilst I attach no great value to these articles, I still should not have submitted to the labor of partially revising them, did I not believe that they set forth some great truths, which, if carried out and enforced by more gifted minds, may do much for human improvement. If, by any thing which I have written, I may be an instrument of directing such minds more seriously to the claims and true greatness of our nature, I shall be most grateful to God. This subject deserves, and will sooner or later engage, the profoundest meditations of wise and good men. I have done for it what I could;

but when I think of its grandeur and importance, I earnestly desire and anticipate for it more worthy advocates. In truth, I shall see with no emotion but joy these fugitive productions forgotten and lost in the superior brightness of writings consecrated to the work of awakening in the human soul a consciousness of its divine and immortal powers."

The publication of a second volume made up of Sermons was owing to a like motive of private benevolence. He had pledged a subscription of five hundred dollars to the Boston Farm School, and being at the time so situated pecuniarily that he could not otherwise well meet the claim, he resorted to this plan as a means of raising the sum. It so happened, however, that he was immediately seized with severe illness, without having been able to correct and prepare more than one discourse for the press. The rest of the volume was selected and arranged by his friend, Dr. Dewey, and the sermons now appear as they were first written for the pulpit. And, finally, it was a characteristic close of his literary career, that the chief inducement which led him to put forth the complete edition of his works, in six volumes, was a desire to make the publication serviceable to a brother, who was then turning his attention to printing and editing as a branch of business. From first to last, authorship was the accident of Dr. Channing's life. With greater physical vigor, he would have been an evangelist, preaching far and wide, with the living voice, the exalting views which had been opened to his earnest, prayerful, patient seeking, or an active reformer, applying directly to the wants of the age the great principle of love with which he felt that Providence was inspiring mankind.

Dr. Channing's publications were the means of introducing him to a society of most refined and high-minded correspondents, and extracts from his letters to them will still further illustrate his literary character.

"*Newport*, October 4, 1821. It wants massiveness, depth, fulness of thought, that is, it wants the essential properties of high poetry. I smile when I hear poetry called *light* reading. The true poet has far-reaching thoughts, a perception of the harmonious and exquisite relations of the universe, an eye that pierces the depths and mysteries of the soul, placing him amidst the most gifted and exalted intelligences."

"*June* 28, 1824.* I can hardly express the feeling the news of Lord Byron's death has given me. That a mind so gifted should have been left to devote its energies to the cause of impiety and vice, and should be so soon and suddenly taken, without making reparation to insulted truth and virtue, — that such a mind is to live for ages in its writings only to degrade and corrupt, — in all this we see the mysterious character of God's providence. I always hoped, that, after the fever of youthful passion, this unhappy man would reflect, repent, and prove that in genius there is something congenial with religion. But he is gone — where human praise and human reproaches cannot follow him. Such examples of perverted talent should reconcile the less gifted to their obscure lot.

"In his whole life he was by way of eminence a lawless man, spurning all restraint, whether divine or human, whether from his own conscience or from society; and he seems to have valued no power more than that of defying and resisting all wills which interfered with his own. That

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

any talent, however stupendous, should have made such a man an idol to your sex shows that you must divide with us the reproach too justly brought against our age of great moral degradation. I learn that there is not on the face of the earth a more corrupt class than the fashionable young men of England. Would this be so, if young women were more true to the cause of virtue? This is almost too grave for a letter; but the toleration of gross vice, so common in what are called the higher classes, is not to be thought of without sorrow and indignation.

"You ask me what I think of Moore's doctrine, that men of the first genius are naturally unfitted for friendship or domestic life. I have no faith in it. . . . . I have no doubt that genius is often joined with vice, but not naturally or necessarily. Mediocrity can boast of as many irritable, self-willed, licentious subjects as high talent. Moore seems to think genius a kind of fever, madness, intoxication. How little does he understand its divinity! I know that sometimes the 'great deeps' in the heart of a man are broken open, and the mind is overwhelmed with a rush of thought and feeling; but generally genius is characterized by self-mastery. It is true of this inspiration what Saint Paul says of a higher, — 'The spirit of a prophet is subject to the prophet.' The highest genius, I believe, is a self-guiding, calm, comprehensive power. It creates in the spirit of the Author of the Universe, in the spirit of order. It worships truth and beauty. There is truth in its wildest inventions, and it tinges its darkest pictures with hues of beauty. As to Moore's notion, that genius, because it delights in the ideal, is soon wearied and disgusted with the real, it is false. The contrary is rather true. He who conceives and loves beauty in its highest forms is most alive to it in its humblest manifestation. He loves it not by comparison, or for its degree, but for its own sake; and the same is true of beauty. The true worshipper of beauty sees it in the lowliest flower,

meets it in every path, enjoys it everywhere. Fact is against Moore. The greatest men I have known have been the most beautiful examples of domestic virtue. Moore's doctrine makes genius a curse, and teaches that the Creator, the source of harmony, has sown discord between the noblest attributes of the soul. I shall not wonder if some half-witted pretenders to genius should, on the strength of Moore's assertion, prove their title by brutality in their domestic and social relations.

"I rejoice with you in Mrs. Hemans's success. She needs it, and I hope it will not harm her. She will not, I think, be intoxicated by the praise of the Edinburgh. The article to which you refer in that work seemed to me to betray little real admiration, but more of studied courtesy and chivalrous resolution to be generous to a lady. You and Mrs. Hemans seem to show, in opposition to the reviewer, that a woman may exceed the limits of a page without betraying her inferiority to man. When I consider how much the life of woman is broken up into little details, and what the routine is to which she is doomed by the present state of society, I do not wonder that she has not written epic poems. As to the Edinburgh, I consider its disparaging tone towards me as an offset for the undue praise received from other quarters. The author of the article is now dead; and as I did not feel a moment's anger towards him during his life, I have no reproach for him now. He was a man of fine powers, and wanted nothing but pure and fixed principles to make him one of the lights of his age."

"*Portsmouth, R. I.*, June 16, 1828.* I received distinctly the impression that Shelley was a noble nature sadly perverted, and that, under happier influences, he might have proved the glory of his race. . . . . .

* To Miss Ruth P. Olney, Providence.

"I should like to know something of Shelley from one worthy of belief and capable of estimating him. I am inclined to think him a man lost to religion through the folly, hypocrisy, and intolerance of its 'friends.' How many noble spirits have been ruined by identifying religion with its loud professors! But I mean not to make excuse for such persons. They have no right to take their ideas of religion from the pulpit and vulgar cant. They have access to her true oracles and expounders, to the teachings of the universe and of Jesus Christ; and these teachings it is their duty to lay open to their less gifted brethren, not to unsettle the foundations of human hope and to precipitate weaker minds from the Rock of Ages into the gulf of doubt, darkness, and despair. I mean not, however, 'to shut the gates of mercy' against the skeptic. That he is sometimes more virtuous than many a believer who condemns him, I doubt not. The mass of people who never think understand little the trials of a superior mind which must think, which cannot but question Nature and Providence, and which has been taught to associate almost indissolubly with moral and religious principles opinions which it sees to be without foundation.

"On such a mind, when it seems to me to err, I dare not pronounce sentence, and I see with pleasure whatever proofs it gives of principle, of respect for duty, amidst its aberrations."

"*June*, 1827. I have sometimes felt, in reading Mrs. Hemans's works, that her sense of the evils of life is too keen and colors her views too much. I love to be touched, moved, but not depressed. No genius, no power of execution, can recompense me for what I suffer from the tones of sorrow coming to me from a highly gifted mind in which the deepest impressions are those of suffering, and over whose brightest inventions there is a hue of sadness. My

confidence in the great purposes of God towards us, my persuasion that all suffering is meant to purify and exalt the soul, to be the occasion of moral strength and victory, leads me to feel that a deep peace and an unbroken resolution in all changes are due alike to ourselves and to our Creator. I may err. Perhaps a life of prosperity has made me incapable of understanding the sorrow-stricken spirit. But it seems to me one of the great purposes and blessed influences of Christian faith to reconcile intense sensibility with peace and energy."

"*Boston*, March 30, 1830.* You have not yet, I trust, fulfilled your mission on earth, though, were it now to end, you would leave behind you emanations of your spirit to act far and wide and in ages to come. I thank you for the last volume you sent me. The last two pieces but one were new to me, and seemed to me to express with great truth and pathos that union of upward aspiration and earthly attachment which I should call a just tribute to both worlds, and which shows the unity of our whole being. . . . . .

"I know that the effort which you ask is a slight one; but, to a man overburdened already, a slight addition of labor is something serious. The motive which you suggest is a more powerful one with me than you can well imagine. I perhaps owe it to myself to say, that I know no one quite as anxious as I am to multiply intellectual, moral, and religious bonds between my own and other countries. Few estimate as humbly as I do the moral worth of what is called national spirit, compared with the spirit of Christianity. I have hoped, by turning men's thoughts on their own nature, — a nature which all hold in common, — to do something toward substituting a more generous and universal bond for those selfish and narrow ones which, as yet, have done more

* To Mrs. Felicia Hemans.

towards dividing than uniting the human family. Of course I have no desire to exclude national attachments, but I would have a new spirit of humanity, founded on respect for human nature, spread abroad, and if, by being a contributor to any literary work on your side of the ocean, I can strengthen a virtuous sympathy between our countries, I will do so very cheerfully, when I have time and strength, both of which are now wanting."

"*April* 2, 1831. I am glad to have an excuse for expressing again my affectionate solicitude for you. May I not hope that you have found increased strength for suffering? Does life still present itself so much under its dark aspects? Are you not attaining to a more reverential consciousness of your own soul, and of its relations to God, so as to feel yourself the possessor of a celestial treasure amidst all earthly changes? Does not the infinite purpose of life open more upon you and interpret to you your sufferings? I cannot bear to think of you as sinking under the evils of life. There are some in whose depression I acquiesce. When I read Byron, for example, I have a satisfaction mixed with compassion in hearing from him the tones of gloomy, angry despondence. I mean that my sense of justice is satisfied. I see him receiving a fit recompense of his guilt. He refused to see and walk in the 'light of life,' and deserved to walk in darkness. He renounced his allegiance to God and to the everlasting law of duty, and abandoned himself without restraint to self-will and pride; and how fit and necessary was it that he should endure the miseries of a lonely, desolate soul! No wonder he looked with a bitter discontent on life, for he carried within himself no revelation of the good for which the trials of life are ordained. There was nothing within him to oppose to the evil without, and he was conquered by that evil. To his diseased apprehension, the power of evil was triumphant in

the universe. He had no suspicion of its infinite weakness, compared with the power of good. He did not understand its ministry in calling forth what is most Divine in man. He was therefore, I say, conquered by it. But evil ought not to conquer *you*. You carry its interpretation within you. You have aids granted but to few, for transmuting it into good. May I not hope that you are gradually rising to that serene, 'starry height'?"

"*July* 16, 1835.* We have just heard of Mrs. Hemans's death. She has done her work nobly, and has gone, I trust, to a higher sphere of action. She has aided the spiritual life in very many whom she never saw. . . . . .

"We are all admiring here a statue of Washington by Chantrey. We think it a noble work. Is it true that the arts have reached their perfection? Their highest province is to express exalted conceptions of human character; and are we not, however slowly, rising to juster and loftier ideas of moral greatness than the ancients had? They are never to be excelled, perhaps, in expressing the perfection of the animal nature and the simpler or more primitive emotions. But in proportion as superstition and slavery disappear and leave the mind to unfold itself more fully, I trust that nobler and more beautiful forms of character will be manifested, which genius will embody in works of art. You and I may not live to see these hopes fulfilled. But a good hope is worth keeping for its own sake."

"1838.† As to Scott's Life by Lockhart, I have read the first volume with singular pleasure. It answers one end of biography better than any I have seen. It shows the formation of the hero's mind. It has always been a puzzle to me, how a man in such an age as this could contrive to fill, cram,

* To Miss Jane E. Roscoe, Liverpool.

† To Miss Harriet Martineau.

his mind with the stories, costumes, &c., of border warfare and a race of barbarians. Lockhart explains it all. Scott's character is much what I expected. I knew that he had no comprehension of the high purposes of literature, — that to him it was a plaything, not a sacred power; that his knowledge of human nature was that of a man of the world, not a philosopher, — that he was, in a word, a most admirable specimen of a man of the world. The union of so much shrewdness and goodness with his absurd Tory prejudices is an illustration of the inconsistencies of human nature. I ask myself, 'Am I as inconsistent as every body else?' But I must ramble on no longer. I wish I could say more of Scott. I certainly owe him a great deal. He and Miss Mitford have solaced many hours of illness."

"*Boston*, May 4, 1838.* I have read with great pleasure the first six volumes of Scott's Life, though sometimes wearied by letters which might as well have been omitted. The work lets the reader into the formation of the subject's mind, or into the circumstances which determined it, and this is no small merit. Not that I think the mind the creature of circumstances; but some men are reflections of the outward more than others, and this I think was eminently the case with Scott. His was not a mind to penetrate itself, haunted with its own mysteries, and conscious of mightier conflicts and processes within than any abroad. He lived abroad. He was a keen, shrewd observer of whatever passed around him. No man ever understood more of what is called life, and of the more superficial workings of the human heart. Philosophy he had none, and he interpreted very poorly the passions which he painted, or suspected little what they indicate. Thus he seems to me to have been formed from abroad, and hence he is a good subject for biography. The

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

greatest minds admit no biography. They are determined from within. Their works spring from unfathomed depths in their own souls, from silent, secret thoughts, inquisitions, aspirations, which come they know not whence, go they know not whither.

"You see I do not place Scott among the greatest; and yet, when I think of his vast range of observation, of his power of appropriating all he saw to his purposes, of his inexhaustible invention, of his wide sympathy, and of the spirit of humanity pervading his writings, I feel something like self-rebuke as I think that I may have spoken of him disparagingly. He discovered want of moral greatness in his want of reverence for his own mind, in his unconsciousness of the holy purpose to which genius may always be consecrated, in his childish admiration of hereditary honors, and his incapacity of conceiving of a higher state of human nature and of society than now exists. He was, as I have more than once said, the ideal of a man of the world, — the highest, most attractive manifestation of that character which I have known. Let me add, that in one thing I sympathize with him, and that is the affectionate reverence which he bore to yourself."

1838.* "I could not but be grateful to you for the kind manner in which you received my remarks on Sir Walter Scott. After sending them, I began to doubt whether I might not have given some pain to so old a friend of Scott. How little mercy great men find from the world! Their very greatness invites unreasonable criticism, for, after all our experience of human nature, we look for consistency in men, and greatness in one particular excites expectations of something proportioned to it in other parts of the character, and when the hero in one walk is found to be much like

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

common men in others, we are more ready to wonder at his deficiency than his superiority.

"One thing I admired in your friend, and that was his patience with dull people. Nothing, perhaps, showed more that his nerves were in good order. To a man of genius, whose thoughts move at lightning-pace, a creeping proser must be a terrible annoyance. This single evil was no small offset against the pleasures of his literary celebrity. Not that I think that a man of genius can be happy only with men like himself. Great people may be as tedious as little ones; but when dull people came to admire Scott, and showed off their dulness at length, that they too might share the joy of admiration, I think his patience must have had a sore trial, and that he proved his humanity in bearing it so quietly. . . . . .

"I have not been able to write, except in a very miscellaneous manner; but my mind has not been idle, and I hope that I may be able to do something soon. . . . . .

"—— was formerly in Congress. —— knew much of our distinguished men. But in this country a few years bring a new set on the political stage, and the distinguished whom they displace pass from memory. Does it require much philosophy nowadays to learn the emptiness of what is called distinction? How few, like you, wear fresh laurels in old age! An hour ago, a friendly visitor was kind enough to speak of me as a candidate for posthumous fame. I felt how many higher reputations had faded away in my own time. It would be a pity if fame were an essential of happiness; for how few get it! It is not the extent, but the quality, of one's influence which constitutes glory. All those who will act nobly on one or a few minds have the prize within their reach.

"With great respect, your sincere friend."

"*What* a beautiful conception the character of Sergeant

Talfourd's Ion is. I wish it were brought out with more dramatic animation, and with a less cumbrous style. Still it has delighted me. . . . . .

"Another book has given us great pleasure, and that is Mrs. Jameson's new book on Canada. I do not know a writer whose works breathe more of the spontaneous, the *free*. Beauty and truth seem to come to her unsought. Her free pencil gives us the Indians with all the signs of life and reality; and many of her remarks on society furnish matter for profound thought." *

"We have had no new book since Bulwer's England which has made any noise among us. Perhaps we are not to expect any good ones soon. Whoever wishes to be read must write for the moment, — must either entertain people or discuss their immediate interests. It is the age for speeches, pamphlets, periodicals, and fictions, and certainly a good deal of mind is thrown off in these forms, and a good deal of fine thought put into circulation. But as for close thinking, consecutive reasoning, and broad views of subjects, we do not superabound with them; and yet it would not be a surprise, if some great, immortal work should be silently matured in this noisy and apparently superficial age.

"The increasing reputation of Coleridge and Wordsworth I think a good omen, though I differ from them on so many points. They have not written for the multitude, and yet live and grow, whilst the writers for the multitude are forgotten. I mean, by this phrase, those who write to *please* the multitude. I honor those who write *for* the multitude, in the true sense of the word, and should value little the highest labors of genius, did I not believe that the *mass*, the race, were to be the wiser and better for them." †

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie. † To Orville Dewey, D. D.

## CHAPTER II.

### RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.

Dr. Channing was, as we have seen, a prophet. His function was, to announce to his fellow-men the spiritual privileges and duties of the present era of Christendom, to bear to the skeptical an inspiring message, to waken the worldly to a consciousness of the infinite benignity of God, to open before the most depressed a vision of the future glories of our race, to rouse the most disheartened to large humanity and a rounded godliness. But in proportion as his views grew clear and complete to his own mind, and as he found his words of calm faith and earnest hope welcomed by the few, while rejected as visionary by too many even of the good, he became desirous to give some fuller statement of the truth which he knew he was empowered to teach. He longed to justify to sober good-sense the thoughts which, uttered in a fragmentary way, might and did seem enthusiastic. For his aim was eminently practical, and he felt that his work would not be done, unless he succeeded in filling men with a fresh and profound reverence for human nature in themselves and their brethren, a reverence which should practically manifest itself in reformed modes of life, individual and collective. For many years, he had been, by reading, observation, and patient thought, accumulating a large mass of materials; and at length it seemed to him *that the* time had come when he was in some measure

worthily fitted to write a work on Man, — his nature, relations, destiny, and duties. The first allusion to this purpose which we find in his correspondence appears in the following letter to the Rev. Dr. Carpenter.

"*Boston*, March 20, 1824. I wish I could send you, in return for your present, some of my own writings. But my state of health obliges me to be almost idle. I have long given up regular application, and am obliged to spend the greatest part of life in using the means of living. Sometimes I hope that I shall be spared to execute a work of some extent, for which I have made preparation; but time flies away, and nothing is done but the accumulation of more materials, and my plan continues to grow, whilst the space for accomplishing it is contracted. But this is the history of a thousand students, — especially of our profession, and it is certainly well for the world that so many schemes of authorship prove abortive."

Other references to this proposed work appear in his letters, and we give a few passages which will serve at once to illustrate his plan, and to show how his desire was constantly baffled, alike by physical infirmity and the constant drafts made upon his time and power by transient questions of immediate importance.

"*Newport*, July 9, 1827.* It will gratify you to know that all your counsel has not been lost upon me, — whom you have probably thought more unimpressible than any of your new flock at the North-end. I have begun to accomplish one of the works to which I have long looked. —— rejoices, and I feel, that, after having provoked you by my insensibility to exhortation, I ought to give you a share in her

* To Joseph Tuckerman, D. D.

joy. What I shall do I am not sure. I sometimes hope that God may give me a place, however low, in the class of his most honored servants, — I mean, of those who throw some new light on the subjects in which human nature has the deepest interest. At the same time, I am not forgetful that one of our infirmities is, to magnify the importance of our own views, and that greater intellectual toil than mine has often proved unprofitable."

"*Sept.* 1837.* It has long been my purpose to give a connected, systematic view of my most important opinions, or convictions, on the subjects to which my life has been devoted. I have made large accumulation of materials, but have wanted strength to labor on them effectually. I am now in better health, and have begun my work. What I shall be able to accomplish I know not. I cannot but fear that I shall disappoint my friends, not only in consequence of the want of physical energy, but from intellectual defects, of which I am deeply conscious. I am not, however, discouraged in the least by such thoughts. We must do what we can, and be grateful, if we can do but little. The immediate reward of seeking the highest truth is inexpressible. It is a reward to know that even a few minds have received light and strength from our labors."

"*July* 10, 1838.† By the kindness of Providence I have now what is called tolerable health, yet for four months I have been disabled from labor. I long to write, for I feel as if I had delivered but a small part of my message. My whole life seems to me but a preparation for a work which I have not done and which I may not be able to do in this world. This is one of the corroborations of a higher life. I feel that I have not exhausted all my spiritual activity, —

* To William Plumer, Esq., Epping, N. H.
† To J. Blanco White.

that there is an indefinite, I had almost said infinite, power and life within, which physical infirmity has not enabled me to bring out. Is this divine energy to perish? Is there nothing of prophecy in these aspirations after higher spheres of action? These anticipations are joyful, though I cannot say that they fully satisfy me. I want to act *now*, to act in a world the darkness, sins, and suffering of which weigh often as a heavy burden on my spirit. It seems to me that there never was so much to be done on earth as at this moment, never so great a demand for clear and bold expositions of truth, and for manifestations of the pure spirit of Christianity. There never was more to contend with, and never more aids for the conflict. The authority of the past never was more unsettled, and the possibility of acting beneficently on the future never was greater. You and I, however, my dear sir, are too advanced to do what we would, or to see the results of others' agency. No matter. The fountain of moral power is inexhaustible, and Providence will raise up mightier champions of truth and virtue."

"*May*, 1839. I look forward with peculiar hope to this summer. I feel now as if I had done my duty in regard to great immediate public interests, and my desire and hope is to give myself to what seems to me the work of my life, — the exposition of my views of truth and duty. I am not sanguine, yet hopeful. I have something to say, yet I feel I may not be spared to do it; — nor shall I count my life's labor lost, if I fail; for all our action here is but the child's preparation for the spiritual manhood which awaits us, and in ripening for this we live gloriously, though we produce no perceptible outward effect now."

Before proceeding to a notice of this work on Man, however, let us first contemplate the position of thought which the author occupied, and breathe in the liberal,

inspiring atmosphere in which he dwelt. We shall thus catch the tone of his mind, and be better prepared to understand, if not to sympathize with, his views.

We will commence with some sketches given by himself, in annual addresses to his people, of the discipline by which he had been trained to freedom and tolerance.

1827. "It has been my lot, as you well know, to perform among you the duties of a minister in a peculiarly trying time, — in a day of angry passions, and of revived intolerance and bigotry. I was about to say that it had been my misfortune to live and preach in this stormy season. But no; I have learned that the great design of the present life is to form the mind and character by difficulty and conflict, and I doubt not that the all-wise God has assigned to me. as well as to others, the conflict which I need. It is not uncommon to hear the wish expressed for peace; and there is no one who breathes this desire from the depth of his soul, I believe, more earnestly than myself. One of the greatest attractions to my summer retreat is the shelter I find there from all the collisions of life; and sometimes, when embosomed in that entire seclusion, seeing nothing around me but the beautiful order of nature, and hearing only its melodies of winds and woods and waters, I have said, 'It is good to be here,' have felt as if a paradise were spreading round me, and have shrunk from the thought of entering again the field of strife, and opening my ear to new sounds of discord. But I remember that the virtue which flies to the shade when God gives a work to be done in the world, which puts away anxiously every painful sight and sound, is not the virtue of Christianity; nor do I believe that the greatest happiness, even in this life, is secured by escaping from its conflicts. Christianity, indeed, recommends and promises peace to its followers. But this is a peace of inward origin, growing from the root of a vigorous piety and

virtue; not that which is infused into us by scenes of outward tranquillity. It is a peace which subsists and thrives amidst storms, which the world giveth not, and cannot take away, — the peace of a strong mind, not of a yielding one, — a peace which is never more entire than in moments of undeserved reproach and of perilous duty, when the soul, conscious of upright purpose, leans confidently on God. Notwithstanding my love of tranquillity, I have felt called to take part in the great struggle which is now going on between religious liberty and the spirit of intolerance and domination, between an improving and a corrupted Christianity; and various circumstances have conspired to give me a prominence in this conflict, which I should have been, and am, the last to covet. . . . . .

"Perhaps the motives which have governed me in this part of my public career have not been sufficiently understood. It may have been supposed by some of you, that I was acting from a vehement attachment to a particular creed; and it is true that I have a strong and growing conviction of the importance of the prominent religious doctrines which I teach. But another principle has operated on my mind more strongly than a zeal for my particular opinions, and this is my attachment to the cause of *religious liberty*. To vindicate the rights of the mind, to maintain intellectual freedom, to withstand intolerance and the spirit of persecution, to save our churches from spiritual despotism, — this has been nearer my heart than to secure a triumph to any distinguishing doctrine of a sect.

"Soon after coming into life, I saw that a new era was opening in this country and in this age, — that a violent struggle was commencing for the restoration of doctrines which had gradually fallen into neglect. The cry of ORTHODOXY was opened, and a system of measures adopted for stifling free inquiry. Vague apprehensions were industriously spread abroad of a secret conspiracy against

what were called the 'Doctrines of the Reformation,' — the 'Essential Doctrines of Christianity'; and the brand of heresy was affixed to doctrines which had been espoused by some of the wisest and greatest men in this country and Europe. It was not so much for the purpose of defending these opinions, as of encouraging fellow-Christians to use their own minds, and to examine freely the doctrines of religion, that I entered the field of controversy. I felt then, what I now more deeply feel, that the human mind is to make progress by freedom, by the deliberate, impartial, and independent exercise of its faculties. I could not submit to have my intellect chained by men whom I knew to have no warrant for their sway, and in some of whom I saw plain marks of inferiority, both as to understanding and heart. I could not endure to see chains fastened on others. I felt the ignominy which we of this enlightened Commonwealth should incur, and with which we should be justly chargeable, if a few men — for few they were, and few they still are — should be permitted to dictate to us our opinions on the most important subjects in the whole range of thought, and should frown into silence the ingenuous lovers of truth. The attempt to fasten on us an antiquated faith, by excommunicating those who were seeking nobler views of Christianity, first summoned me to conflicts from which I have not yet been released. The part which I have taken I have had no cause to regret. My love of freedom has grown with the growth of my mind. It is now interwoven with all my religious feelings, and with all my sympathies and benevolent sentiments; for I am persuaded that the glory of God, or just and ennobling conceptions of his character, and the happiness and progress of the human race, demand nothing so urgently as that our faculties should be unimpeded, and the widest range be given to thought. If we are to grow, it must be by a free use of our powers. If we are to attain brighter and more enlarged conceptions of Christianity,

we must begin with feeling that past ages have not exhausted Christian truth, and that we may make advances on the wisdom of our fathers. I know nothing which indicates greater ignorance of the history of the Church and of the history of mankind, nothing more fitted to reduce the intellect to imbecility, and to carry back the race to barbarism, than the idea that we have nothing more to learn, that Christianity has come down to us pure and perfect, and that our only duty is implicitly to receive the lessons of our catechisms. I am sure that this is not true. That Christianity has been dreadfully disfigured, all true hearts must know. That it was purified from all corruptions by the first Reformers is to suppose them gifted with miraculous lights as bright as those which beamed on the Apostles. Christianity is not thus purified. None of us hold it in its purity. I feel deeply the imperfections of all classes and denominations; and the hopes of Christianity rest on the courage and piety of men who, disclaiming all human authority, and the fetters of all creeds, give themselves to deliberate, devout, fearless study of God's word, in connection with his works and providence. Freedom of intellect, joined with obedience to whatever truth is already known, is the appointed spirit and energy by which the Church and the world are to be disenthralled from the many errors which yet darken religion and impair its ennobling influence.

"If my own faculties have made any progress, I owe it to nothing so much as to the spirit of intellectual freedom which I have imbibed; and the place of this, I believe, no endowments of nature, no books, no association with learned men, would in any measure have supplied. It was my lot to come forward at a period when the question was to be settled whether this freedom should be enjoyed, or whether an inquisition, with ministers at its head, should bind the chains of death on the mind of this country. God's good providence, joined with an early disposition to live and to

think alone, and with an education which had made freedom dear, decided the part which I took. The decision which I made in this great controversy, the cause which I espoused, and I hope I may say the consistency with which I have adhered to it, you know. My ministry, amidst all its imperfections, has, I think, been uniformly marked by an assertion of the rights and duty of every individual to exert his own faculties, and by urging on every man the duty of using his best powers, in the free, unbiased investigation of religious truth. I trust that I have not been wholly useless. That I have contributed something to give to others courage in thinking and in expressing their thoughts, I trust; and I have not a doubt that, at this moment, this whole country is indebted to the exertion made in this our city for the degree of religious liberty which it enjoys.

"I have stated what has been my leading aim in the controversies in which I have mingled. I now return to you, my hearers, not merely with undiminished, but with an increased, desire to respect and uphold your intellectual freedom, and to defend this great cause of the human race. I bring with me no desire to dictate, to force upon others my own views, to awe, to intimidate, or to use any weapons but those of reason and persuasion. I am more and more shocked with the tyranny of the pulpit, with the abuse of the influence which this sacred place affords, with the desire of the teachers of religion to be heard as oracles, with the hardihood with which they make a partisan of the Supreme Being."

1830. "On one point, you will bear me witness. I have never aimed to alienate you from any body of Christians. I am not conscious of having yielded to a *sectarian spirit*, even when I contended most earnestly for my peculiar views. I have never thought myself a better man because I have escaped what seem to me gross errors prevailing in Chris-

tendom, nor have I, as I believe, ever shut my eyes on the virtue and piety of those by whom these errors may have been sustained. I have felt that it is not the greatness of our light, but our faithfulness to our light, whether great or small, by which character is to be judged. If I have ever infused unkind or disparaging feelings towards other Christians, I have grievously injured you, and, instead of being a minister of righteousness, have been the minister of sin. May you triumph over any such unhappy influence! . . . . .

"One of your trials arises from the state of the Christian world, to which reference has now been made; and I would offer you, on this point, a few words of counsel. Our principal duties in such circumstances may be expressed in two plain precepts: — *Respect those who differ from you, and also respect yourselves.* Give due honor to men of different sects. Do not feel as if you had monopolized truth or goodness. Treat none with derision. Esteem no man the more for thinking as you do, and no man the less for thinking otherwise; but judge all men by the principles which govern their *lives.* Ascribe not what you deem error to weakness of intellect or corruption of heart, but rejoice in witnessing superior powers and tried virtue in the neighbourhood of what you cannot but account superstition or prejudice. Never think of Christ's church as shut up within limits of human invention, but as comprehending all sects, and let your attachment to the whole triumph over your interest in any of its parts. Honor all men.

"At the same time respect yourselves. Claiming no superiority, allow not this claim in others. Expect and require from others the same deference which you feel yourselves bound to pay. As you set up no pretensions to exclusive sanctity in yourselves, distrust them in your neighbour. The exclusive saint bears one broad mark of the want of sanctity. The real Christian is the last man to be

a pretender. Never suffer your opinions to be treated with scorn in social intercourse, any more than you would your characters; but whilst you force them on none, let men see that you reverence them as the truth, and that you expect decorum and courtesy in those who converse with you on this, as on other deeply interesting subjects. Always feel yourselves standing on the ground of equality with every sect and party, and countenance none by your tameness, or by shrinking from your convictions, to assume towards you a tone of dictation, superiority, or scorn. Be true to yourselves and to your principles. One of the great lessons taught me by my experience is, that self-respect, founded, not on outward distinction, but on the essential power and rights of human nature, is the guardian of virtue, and itself among the chief of virtues."

The last sentence of the foregoing extract gives us insight into one of Dr. Channing's chief springs of action. Though naturally diffident and modest by principle, though conscientious and cautious almost to an extreme, and though even reverential to his fellow-men of every grade of intellect and character, he was at the same time singularly self-relying. On his calm and gentle countenance there reposed an expression of firm dignity, which commanded a just deference. His very consciousness of the greatness of the human spirit in its essential powers and heavenly destination made him incapable of trifling with another or of submitting to be trifled with. He felt, too, that the claims of honor and manly courtesy, as well as of Christian charity, were sadly slighted by religious controversialists, and sought, therefore, to carry into the sphere of theological discussion the same generous and magnanimous, while self-balanced and brave, spirit which *becomes* high-minded persons in all their intercourse.

This trait was so characteristic, that it may be well to illustrate it by some passages from his papers and letters.

1823. "It was intended that the Christian Disciple should be distinguished by proposing as its great end, not the defence of particular opinions so much as the spreading of the mild, candid, and tolerant spirit of Christianity. It was believed that the best service which can be rendered to the truth is to bring men's minds into that dispassionate and benevolent frame which is congenial with truth, and, like the gift of sight to the blind, lets in at once new light and wide and unexpected views. . . . . The plan of the work is now to be extended, and it will be made the vehicle of articles which may at once explain the views of its friends, and repel the attacks so often made, both on their opinions and characters. To this duty the editors are unhappily called by a long experience of the utter inefficacy of silence and endurance to disarm prejudice and produce a more tranquil and dispassionate state of the public mind. . . . . .

"They are not insensible to the dangers of controversy, and are aware that men, in disputing for what they call truth, lose the very virtues which truth should promote, — candor, sincerity, and good-will, — and that they are tempted to compass their ends by misrepresentation and calumny. But it is not impossible, they conceive, to be at once earnest and honest disputants, to unite zeal for a system with readiness to renounce it if it should be proved false, to oppose a man's opinions without hating his person. Controversy may be fair and generous, and if the conductors of this work can demonstrate this by example, they will render a rare service to the Christian community. . . . . By the fair and kind spirit of controversy we mean a disposition to state the opinions of an adversary truly, to meet the full force of his arguments, to acknowledge his intelligence and virtues, to respect his motives while we expose his opinions, to avoid expressions

of irritation and ill-will, to seek truth and not the humiliation of an adverse party. There may, indeed, be a necessity for personalities in controversy, and this takes place when an opponent relies for success on abuse, malignity, and dishonest statements. Justice may demand a free exposure of such base practices. But the necessity is always to be lamented, and the friends of truth will be anxious to prevent points in dispute from being complicated with the characters of individuals and circumstances of irritation."

1826. "The temper of the sermon* is arraigned. If the author has said a word to make Trinitarians odious, to rob them of their Christian rights or of the love and esteem of their brethren, let him be condemned. No matter from what party an unkind, censorious, intolerant spirit proceeds, it is evil, unchristian, and a sure proof that he who possesses it has not drunk largely into the spirit of Jesus Christ. Any publication tending to spread bitterness through any denomination should be disowned. . . . . .

"The temper of the discourse is censured. Why? Because it expresses anger or unkindness towards opponents? Is there the least impeachment of their motives? Not a word to this effect can be found in the discourse. The author has only set forth in plain and strong language what seems to him to be irrational and dishonorable to God and injurious to the human character in the system which he is opposing. He expressly states that he has no disposition to make the opinions he condemns measures of character, and cordially acknowledges the virtues of multitudes who espouse them. And is it, then, 'uncourteous,' 'reprehensible,' 'unjustifiable,' 'inexcusable,' to say that an opinion is absurd and of degrading tendency? . . . . . We invite our fellow-

* Sermon at the Dedication of the Second Congregational Church, New York.

Christians to examine freely our opinions, and to tell us plainly what they see in them dishonorable to God or injurious to man. The freer such discussion, the better. Let opinions be spoken of unreservedly. We blame no class of Christians for exposing the absurdities and weak points of prevailing creeds. We only say to them, 'Do not judge the motives of your brethren in embracing the opinions which you reject. Do not shut your eyes on their virtues, because they adopt different views. Rejoice in the proofs of their piety, coupled though it may be with error. Error is not guilt. Do not blame them for not yielding to your arguments; your judgment may be as fallible as theirs. In a word, esteem them and love them as heartily as if their creed was your own.' If the sermon fails in this generous feeling, let it be condemned. . . . . .

"It should be considered, that false doctrines, just so far as they are wide-spread and deeply rooted, need free and firm resistance. Men through long use grow blind and callous to their inconsistency. Old errors must be placed in new lights and broadly exposed. Such was the principle on which this sermon was written, and we venture to say, that, if any individual would do good, he must adopt this course. Is it said, men thus opposed will be exasperated? We answer, they may be *at first*, but they will learn by degrees to bear with frankness; whilst, if they are accustomed to have their worst opinions treated with deference, they will continue foolishly sensitive to the faintest contradiction. But we repeat, that, the bolder the opposition to opinions, the greater should be the care to avoid personalities. . . . . .

"There are good men who will say that it is impossible to make this separation between opinions and those who hold them, that to attack the first is to exasperate the last, and that peace is so great a good as to make it better to leave errors to the power of time than to create controversy. We answer, that truth is a greater good than peace, that we

do not despair of the progress of the human mind and virtue, that we know those who differ in views yet who love one another, and that on the whole there is a growing forbearance and moderation amidst the freest discussions. Men who, when treated with respect and kindness, will not allow their opinions to be touched, and resent earnest exposure of their supposed errors as wrong, are alone responsible if controversy is embittered; nor must we shut up in our own breasts what we deem great truths, lest some sensitive persons should be wounded. . . . . .

"In the Trinitarian theology we see, as we believe, a principal obstruction to a purer piety and more exalted morality. We acquit those who hold it of any desire to withstand this progress. Still the system seems to us false and pernicious, and one which ought to be exposed. There are peculiar reasons for exposing it. Its chief prop in the community, as we think, is fear. Multitudes believe that to doubt about it is to be damned. Their minds are spell-bound. They dare not exert their faculties in these mysteries. They are too sacred to be touched. The spirits thus enthralled should be set free from these heavy chains of terror. They cannot move a step towards truth without courage to think. And this courage can be re-awakened in the community only by examples of frank, strong, earnest discussion. Better is it, far better, to rouse some bad passions, than to perpetuate the prevalent slavery and lethargy.

"Some there may be who will say, 'The world will go on as it has done; why disturb it in the vain hope of enlightening it?' We have not so learned the wisdom of Jesus. We believe that Christianity is destined to exert a mighty energy on the human soul, that the piety which prevails, however sincere, is greatly debased by erroneous views, and that just as far as purer thoughts of God and of his purposes prevail, a holier and more divine spirit will be diffused. We dare not, then, as we would be true to our Master or to our own

consciences, refrain from an open and strong testimony to what we deem the truth. We would do it in all charity. We would not, for the universe, sully one good man's honest name. We would not question the worth of those whom we are summoned to oppose. But we must speak freely, earnestly, and fearlessly, and we would encourage freedom of thought and speech in all men as our noblest birthright."

1825.* "I received from Mr. Kinder, the other day, Mr. Wellbeloved's Letters to Wrangham, for which I thank him, and which I read with much satisfaction. You may have perceived that I do not entirely sympathize with the Unitarians of England, and their system seems to me to need some important modifications to make it correspond with the deepest wants of our nature, and with some of the strongest impressions which the Scriptures give to plain, unprejudiced minds. But still I feel with great indignation the wrongs done to them by such men as Magee and Wrangham, and Providence seems to me to smile upon them in raising up among them vindicators so powerful and so distinguished by the spirit of Christianity as Carpenter and Wellbeloved. I regret that I did not see these excellent men, for such I am authorized to esteem them by the concurrent testimony of all who know them."

"*Sept.* 19, 1827.† I find an increasing aversion to this mode of controversy. What an example we give to men of the world! Where will you find more invective than among us Christians? My wish is to expose doctrines most fully, but to let individuals alone. I know the answer,—'Must unprincipled men have the field to themselves? Must not good men defend themselves? Must not vice be called by its right name?' &c. In all this there is truth; but it seems

* To Mrs. L. Kinder. † To Joseph Tuckerman, D. D.

to me we have yet to learn the weapons which the good must oppose to the bad. Virtue has not learned her true tone yet. It is the tone of *conscious superiority*, and this, I apprehend, is always calm, and expressive of unaffected dignity. It feels a strength in itself, and is not therefore disturbed by clamor. I can conceive of a tone of insulted virtue, which will be at once mild and awful, and will be felt by the multitude, though betraying no emotion. This we want. Who has it? When I conceive of this, and compare with it the ordinary tone of controversy, I am dissatisfied. . . . . .

"I could have been amused with your account of your conversation with ——, had he spared his compliment at the end, — 'You are an honest man.' There is insolence in this concession of honesty to us. These exclusive pretenders to piety seem to think that they confer a great favor by admitting that we are not unprincipled. You performed your part to admiration. When will men who hold great truth feel what they owe to it, and meet the assumptions of others with a righteous confidence? I fear you will think I am somewhat belligerent in my feelings; but I was never calmer, and should not have thought of religious controversy but for your letter."

"*August* 30, 1839.* I have received many insulting *anonymous* letters in the course of the last thirty years, but never before, as far as I can recollect, received an insulting communication from an individual claiming to be regarded as a Christian or a gentleman. As far as I am personally concerned, the matter gives me not the slightest uneasiness; but it is painful to me, as a Christian and a member of society, to see a *leader* in the Church falling short of the common decencies and courtesies of life.

* To Orville Dewey, D. D.

Whether the pamphlets were sent by a Unitarian minister is of course doubtful. I hope they were not; for anonymous writing is always open to objection. But be this as it may, in fastening on me without a shadow of reason as the offender, and in writing to me as —— has done, he has been guilty of a rudeness, which, by the common law of society, respectable people do not practise towards each other. I write this, not that I desire any apology; for, having done this duty, I shall dismiss the matter from my thoughts; but if you are acquainted with any right-minded, honorable men of ——'s congregation, you will do well to state the matter to them, that they may counsel him to abstain from such discreditable proceedings, fitted only to breed strife within the Church, and to bring reproach on it from abroad.

. . . . . .

"P. S. Perhaps you may think the matter about which I have written you too unimportant to be spoken of, and if so, do say nothing about it, for, I assure you, I have not the slightest sensibility on the point. Long use has hardened me to attacks, especially from professed theological combatants. The question is simply, — 'Can any good come from the matter?'"

Thus bold and strong, and even sternly just, was Dr. Channing in guarding the rights of all seekers of truth. His mildness was free from mawkishness. He treated others, and expected to be treated, with a manly decision. Practically he made the discrimination between opinions and persons which he so constantly urged as a duty. He asked for his errors no tolerance; he only demanded justice as a man. This frank, straightforward honesty of mind did not contract, but deepened and widened, his liberality. He looked round respectfully and earnestly upon all fellow-inquirers, hoping to gain

from them the light for which his whole spirit was longing. This temper of mind may be best illustrated by a few manifestations of it, as given in his letters.

"*Boston*, February 26, 1836.* I am not a stranger to your writings. Your Letters on Spain were very interesting to me, and made me desirous to see every thing from your pen. I thank you for your testimony to great truths; for the clear light in which you have placed them; and, above all, for the ardent and all-sacrificing love of truth, which has given so singular a direction to your life. It would give me great delight to be near you, to learn from your own lips the history of your mind, of your doubts, researches, and illuminations, of your joy in reaching a brighter light, and of your trials, obstacles, discouragements, and sufferings. I trust, I cannot doubt, that you find, in your more spiritual and enlarged views of Christianity, in your more filial views of God, abundant compensations for sufferings. I have wished you would give us, or leave behind you, an autobiography. With what eagerness should I devour such a work! The progress of every mind is interesting; but how few minds have travelled such a path as yours! On one subject, I should be very glad to have the fruits of your observation. We all feel that there is an evil to be deplored in the Christian world far more than doctrinal errors; and that is, the unfaithfulness of Christians to the light which they have attained. We are sometimes almost tempted to say that Christianity is but a name, so little is its power felt. I should like to know among what bodies of Christians there has seemed to you to be the greatest fidelity to their convictions, be these convictions just or not. I should like to know what particular views of our religion have seemed to you to take the strongest hold on the human mind; what

* To J. Blanco White.

causes contribute most to the general unfaithfulness, and what seem to you the most effectual means of resisting them. That the great moral purpose of Christianity is so little answered would be the most painful of all thoughts, had not habit seared us to it."

"*Boston*, July 29, 1836.* Your experience is a type of the world's history. You have passed, in your short life, through the stages which centuries are required to accomplish in the case of the race. When I see in an individual mind such transitions from error to large and sustaining views of God and human destiny, I see a pledge of the triumphs of truth in which the struggles of ages are to terminate. By this I do not mean that you or I have attained to much truth. I am speaking of your present mind only in comparison with the past. Undoubtedly what you and I call light seems obscurity to higher intelligences, and will seem so to more improved periods of society. But we have gained something through spiritual effort, conflict, — and this is a pledge of greater attainment to ourselves and the race. May our hearts swell with bright anticipations!

"I am glad that you are to write the history of your mind. I grieve that I may not see it; but I would not precipitate its publication. How I should delight to talk with you of the doubts, trials, through which you have made your way! I should be glad to know what you think of the probable results of the great efforts now made by Catholicism to regain its lost sceptre. Some of the sects in this country are quite alarmed, and, what is very striking, the greatest alarm is among those who think themselves about as infallible as the Pope. Have they a consciousness, that, if men are to choose between different infallibilities, they will be apt to choose the Pope's as the oldest and sustained

* To J. Blanco White.

by most votes? Have they a consciousness of laying down the very principles on which Romanism rests, and do they therefore fear that consistency will carry over their converts to the mother church? I have been thinking lately of preparing a few lectures on the *fundamental*, great *idea* on which each church or sect is built, and of expounding by this the past history and future prospects of each. I form plans, however, only to see them fail. By much quiet, I feel myself in comfortable health, and am advancing in life, accomplishing hardly any thing which I propose. I do not, however, repine. I am not needed by God. That I am suffered to do any thing, I owe to his goodness; and that goodness, I trust, is leading me onward wisely, by disappointment, privation, as well as success, to spheres of action beyond all imagination and hope."

"*September* 10, 1837.* I thank you for the effort you made to write me in May last, when you were laboring under severe indisposition. You will be rewarded, when I tell you how much pleasure your letter gave me. I am so liable to self-distrust, that the confirmation of my views by those who have had peculiar advantages for judging them wisely gives me relief and strength. I know no one whose opinion of my Letter on Catholicism I should value as much as your own. The essay, indeed, was an humble one, hardly worth the notice you gave it. Still, to know that I have expressed some great truth, even in so humble a form, is a happiness. To know that I have escaped the extravagances and prejudices into which difference of faith so commonly leads is a relief. The fear of giving circulation to error has made me almost too cautious about giving my mind to the public. In this state of mind, it has been a comfort to me to see my writings subjected to unsparing criticism. If

* To J. Blanco White.

I have published little myself, I have drawn out a great many publications from others; so that I trust that my mistakes will do no great harm. Should a few years of tolerable health be given me, I shall not regret that I have deferred writing on many subjects; for many mists which once hung over them have been scattered, and I shall write with greater consciousness of seeing my way plain before me.

"Your remarks about infallibility in your letter and various publications are very interesting. One thing must make us indulgent towards many of the ardent champions of infallibility. They feel as if there were no medium between this and utter skepticism. The dread of losing hold of vital truths is what produces in multitudes a shrinking from doubt and investigation. They suspect little that they are betraying a singular distrust of these truths, by their anxiety to keep them from being called in question. It is not sufficiently considered, that infallibility, to be good for any thing, must be sustained by *infallible reasoning;* and this furnishes an argument against Catholicism which is not always brought out with sufficient clearness. The Catholic Church, starting from the fallibleness of individuals, requires them to bow to an infallible head or tribunal. But unless the individual be infallible, in settling the question where the infallibleness resides, he is left in as much uncertainty as if it did not exist. Individual infallibleness is thus essentially involved in Romanism, although the denial of it is the very foundation on which the system rests."

"*Boston*, July 10, 1838.* You would probably say something in which I could not join you; but where I see proofs of a sincere love to truth and mankind, I wish a man to give out his whole mind. Undoubtedly he will send forth error, for this is a condition of all human speculations;

* Draft of a letter to J. Blanco White.

but in his free spiritual activity, he must have caught some new glimpses of truth; he must furnish hints, at least, by which future thinkers may profit. I have often received most salutary impulses from works with which I have not agreed. The danger of most of us is, that we narrow ourselves to particular trains of thought, and from this an opponent is more likely to save us than any other person. Indeed, I owe my highest convictions of truth to its ablest opponents; for I never feel my grasp of it so firm, as after knowing the strength of all that can be objected to it. I should expect from you, however, other aid than this; for though in some things we should differ, in how many should we agree!"

"*September* 18, 1839.* How happy should I be to talk with you of your history, and to get your views (among other subjects) of the late Popish explosion at Oxford! Not that this is matter of surprise. I am prepared for such bursts of Romanism. This system could not have lasted so long, or spread so far, without some deep foundations in our nature. The ideas, or names, of *Church* and *Antiquity* are potent spells. Men, in their weakness, ignorance, and sloth, delight in the shelter they find in a vast and time-hallowed organization. How strong and bold we become, when backed by crowds, and great names, and the authority of ages! It is not wonderful that Romanism should revive at this moment, when a morbid dread of innovation is reacting against the spirit of reform, and driving men back on the past. This Oxford movement is the more likely to spread, because it seems not to be the work of policy or priestly ambition so much as a genuine fanaticism. England is more given to superstition than this country, and as little given to the study of moral and religious truth. Still, there is no great danger. In an age when the people are study-

* To J. Blanco White.

ing and applying physical laws, and dealing earnestly with physical realities, and getting the shrewdness which arises from the spirit of trade and money-making, fanaticism must be hemmed within narrow limits. The great, especially the ultra-conservatives, are more exposed to the contagion than the multitude. How desirable, amidst all these corruptions, that a nobler form of Christianity should be preached and practised with an unaffected, all-sacrificing earnestness, zeal, force! It is not by assailing the *low* in practice or principle, but by manifesting the *high*, that the great work of reformation is to go on. Whence shall this force come?"

"*February* 27, 1841.* I have been reading, or rather am just finishing, a book which I doubt not you have read with great interest, — Ranke's History of the Popes. I confess I was not before fully aware of the powerful reaction of Catholicism against Protestantism at the close of the sixteenth century. It is plain that the civil power was the right arm of the Church, and that she reconquered her lost possessions chiefly by force. But the civil power did not act wholly, or perhaps mainly, from policy, but very much from religious impulses, so that the religious principle lay at the foundation of the mighty movement which rocked all Europe. What so formidable as this principle in its perversions! Men really believed, from the throne to the cottage, that a fellow-creature, holding what was called a heresy, was God's *personal foe*, that their hatred of him was shared by the Creator, and that to drive him into the Church, or to drive him out of the world into hell, was the most acceptable service they could render to Heaven. It is comforting to think that this horrible doctrine was really held, — that it was not a mere *pretext* of tyranny, — that the Pope and Emperor yield-

* To J. Blanco White.

ed as hearty assent to it as the common man. But, on the other hand, it is a fearful thought, that men are liable to such delusions, — that God's name may be enlisted conscientiously on the side of the fiercest passions, — that tyranny, in its most terrible forms, may be grounded on ideas of duty and religion. Are we sure that we are safe now against illusions equally pernicious, though of a different character? We have certainly gained something. The fundamental error of Catholicism was an utter distrust of human nature on the subject of religion. It was universally believed that religion was to be imposed on man from abroad, that there was nothing in his intellect or affections to carry him to God, — an opinion not very strange in an age of darkness, — and nothing more was needed for the superstructure which was reared on it. This we have outgrown in a measure, and I have no fear of the revival of the notion; and still more, I have great hopes from the partial recognition of men's capacities and rights. But the great fact of history, that the development of our mysterious nature has been made through so much error, suffering, conflict, must always chastise our hopes. What a spell seems to bind the nations at this moment! What has France learned from the past? — But I have no thought of inflicting on you gloomy forebodings. Such are some of the ideas which Ranke's book suggests, but on the whole it is very encouraging. He teaches that a dangerous principle or force, by its very prevalence, awakens counteracting forces, and that the springs which are at work in human affairs are too complicated and vast to be comprehended or managed by civil or religious despots. Catholicism met resistance to its project of universal empire from the jealousies of the very states on which it leaned. May it not be added, that the Jesuits, by their very intelligence and subtleties, at first so successful, awakened an intellectual force fatal to their cause? *They* undertook to *reason* men out of their *reason;* an

enterprise which could not but fail in the long run. — All this is an old story to you, but Ranke is on my table, and I am fresh from his pages; and I fell naturally into this train of thoughts."

"*Newport*, May 8, 1841.* I show you by my speedy reply how acceptable your letter was to me. Its spirit is indeed encouraging and delightful to me, not for any selfish reasons, not because *I* am included in its liberality, but for its own sake, because it is the spirit of Christianity, and such as man should always cherish toward man. I certainly ought not to suspect myself of taking pleasure in another's candor because I am sheltered under it, for I have learned to live without experience of candor. I have passed nearly forty years under no small reproach, denunciation, and proscription. I have been deprived, not merely of good name, but of what is far dearer to a Christian, of no small degree of the *moral influence* which I am bound to exert, and yet I have made no angry complaint. Perhaps, in my love of quiet, retired thought, I have not been sensitive enough to the injury done me. I invite no liberality toward myself, but when it is extended to me, I welcome it, especially as I see in it the sign of a better day, of a brighter manifestation of the spirit of our religion. . . . . .

"You say that the Unitarians might make 'many concessions' to the Trinitarians. It is true I might adopt much of the Trinitarian language, not only on the Trinity, but the Atonement. I could say, that Christ died to magnify the law, to satisfy Divine justice, and that God cannot forgive without manifesting his displeasure at sin. But I cannot think with Talleyrand, that the 'use of language is to hide our thoughts.' Such approximations to those from whom we really differ seem to me to put in peril our 'sim-

* To Professor George Bush, New York.

plicity and godly sincerity.' I know not where they will stop. They also obstruct the progress of truth, and to the truth every Christian must be willing to be a martyr. Still more, the usurpation which demands such concessions is a wrong to our common Lord and Master, and to the human mind, which must not be debarred from seeking truth, and giving utterance to its deep convictions. In saying this, I do not speak as a Unitarian, but an independent Christian. I have little or no interest in Unitarians *as a sect.* I have hardly any thing to do with them. I can endure no sectarian bonds. With Dr. Priestley, a good and great man, who had most to do in producing the late Unitarian movement, I have less sympathy than with many of the 'Orthodox.' I shall soon publish a discourse on 'the Church,' which I will send you, and which will show my position in this respect. I would not have you imagine that any sectarian feeling prevents my advances to other sects."

"*August* 29, 1841.* Your religious experience, as you relate it, has been fitted to carry you forward. There are advantages in having known error and felt its power, if we are so happy as to escape from it. We know the truth more distinctly by contrast. We have a wider field for observation and comparison, and, what is of great importance, we can understand the feelings of those from whom we differ, and do them greater justice. I am strongly opposed to Methodism, not for its speculative errors, but for its spirit of domination. No sect seems to me more fettered, or to have more the spirit of a sect. It is a religious aristocracy, combining a great power for narrow ends. As I grow older, I grieve more and more at the impositions on the human mind, at the machinery by which the few keep down the many. I distrust sectarian influence more and more.

* To Mr. W. Trevilcock, Carharrack.

I am more detached from a denomination, and strive to feel more my connection with the Universal Church, with all good and holy men. I am little of a Unitarian, have little sympathy with the system of Priestley and Belsham, and stand aloof from all but those who strive and pray for clearer light, who look for a purer and more effectual manifestation of Christian truth."

The passage last quoted, breathing as it does the temper of liberality and aspiration, which, characterizing Dr. Channing's youth, had strengthened through his manhood, gave rise to the rumor of his having changed his opinions, — a rumor so absurd, that it would be unworthy even of a passing notice, had not disingenuous theologians systematically perverted the plain meaning of the words, "*I am little of a Unitarian.*" William Ellery Channing was a member of the Church Universal of the Lovers of God and Lovers of Man. He knew that religion was a *life*, and not a creed or a form. In the spirit of pure, holy goodness, he aspired to be one with the Heavenly Father, — in generous, respectful, overflowing kindness, he purposed to be one with all human brethren. Meanwhile he sought truth, — such views of the Infinite God, of his relations to created spirits, of man's appointed end and rightful aims, as should be in accordance with *reality*. Jesus Christ he welcomed with unlimited reverence and affection, as the full manifestation of what human existence in communion with the Divine Being might be and should be. He saw in this "first-born of many brethren" a revelation of a spiritual mystery, whose depth of glory no ages of the past had fathomed. He waited in prayerful confidence for a fuller apprehension of the sublime career opened before mankind. Out of superstition and cant,

skepticism and fear, sophistry and selfish strife, he longed to be delivered into "the glorious liberty of the children of God." On sectarianism and theological warfare he looked down with profound disgust and pity, and valued bodies of believers and individual disciples according to the degree in which he saw reflected in them the image of the common Master, who prayed that "all" might be "one." Unitarianism he conscientiously considered an advance towards an unobscured view of the Christian religion. But the thought of resting in a Unitarian creed, or of limiting his sympathies to a Unitarian denomination, never for a moment shadowed his mind. He knew his ignorance, he felt his limitations, too well for any such bigotry and narrowness. Christendom was to him a living body, for ever animated from on high, constantly unfolding, instinct with a spirit of reform, providentially guarded and guided, destined to become a true catholic unity, by means of love embodied in holy characters and humane deeds. He joined hands with the grand circle of the hopeful and devoted "followers of God" who were working together with Him to introduce the kingdom of heaven upon earth. In mere speculative opinions, he was never more decidedly a Unitarian, or, to use his own definition, a believer that "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone and exclusively the Supreme and Independent God," than in the last year of his life and on his death-bed; but at no previous period either was he so humbly watching for some influx of the light of life which might renovate the nations. Constitutionally, he had a dread of sacrificing independence by too close ties of association; from the whole cast of his philosophy, he was led to attach a superlative value to indi-

viduality in character, thought, action ; and experience had taught him to "fear the shackles which a party connection imposed." In a word, he regarded himself "as belonging, not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ both on earth and in heaven." * In the following passages he has so fully defined his position, that no person of intelligence and candor can misunderstand him.

"1827. It is the influence of the works of God to set our minds free from all bigotry and prejudice. In the presence of nature I forget the religious and national distinctions which divide mankind, and sympathize with the benevolent Power which sustains all. I feel that I belong not to a part, but to the whole, — to the universe of God. The creation is a powerful teacher of liberal feelings, and does much to counteract the illiberal preaching which passes for Christianity. After hearing in a church a discourse which makes God a partial being and identifies him with a sect, I delight to escape into the open air, and one view of the heavens, or of any of the great features of nature, is enough to scatter the gloom which had gathered over me, and to teach me that what has been said, however well intended, is false. God's works confirm his word, — assure me, after all which I have heard, that he is still the universal Father. I have not come, then, from viewing God's works to breathe into you narrowness and bitterness of feeling. I would come in that spirit of universal charity and benignity which befits a pupil of the universe, and still more a disciple of Christ. I aim not to sever you from others; I aim only to give you a just self-respect, a sense of what is due to your own minds, — moral and religious independence, energy of character which will not yield blindly to any external influence, whenever

* Works, Vol. III., p. 211.

exerted, or however it may strive to wrap itself in a sacred garb. This spirit is not inconsistent with true love, but is its ally and natural associate."

"*Boston*, June 2, 1828.* There was one part of your letter which gave me peculiar pleasure, — that in which you speak of the favor which my discourse on the evidences of Christianity has found in England. I pretend not to be indifferent to literary reputation, but I hope I may say that the thought of contributing any thing to a more intelligent reception and to more generous views of our religion is dearer to me than any human praise. Your letter gives me reason to think that you accord with me, not, perhaps, in my peculiarities of faith, — for of these you say nothing, — but in the conviction, that Christianity is often injured by narrow and degrading modes of exhibiting it, and that its generous character and ennobling influence are very imperfectly understood. Allow me to say, that I take the more pleasure in making these inferences as to your state of mind, because your sex, with all their merits, — and these are above praise, — have had their full share in fixing the present low standard of religion, by the ease with which they have given up their minds to be awed and formed by vulgar and menacing teachers. I do hail the marks of intellectual freedom and moral courage in your sex with peculiar hope; for woman, through her maternal and social influences, must always act on the religion of a community with great power; and if subdued by an illiberal, irrational faith, she will do much to spread the infection around her.

"I speak to you freely, for you have encouraged me to do so, — and the more freely, because, if you agree with me as far as I suppose, I should rejoice to enlist you in what seems to me the greatest cause on earth. Do not imagine

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

that I would draw you into sectarian warfare. I would have you bear your public *testimony* to Christianity, as a religion of benignant aspect, of a liberal spirit, of lofty purposes, given to free and enlarge the intellect, to form a higher order of character, a filial and elevating piety, and an unbounded charity, — and to indue the will with invincible strength in well-doing. I want our religion to be taken out of the hands of technical, professional men, — who look at it through the mists of the dark ages. It is the property, not of priests, but of the human race, and every superior mind may and should do something towards asserting its celestial dignity."

"*June* 16, 1831.* The immense moral power now exerted by France over the civilized world, a power growing from her geographical position, from her political relations, as the centre and spring of the great revolutionary movement in Europe, and from the universality of her language and literature, renders her at this moment the most interesting nation on earth. The cause of free institutions and of human improvement seems specially committed to her. When I take this view of France, I am greatly afflicted by what I hear of the want of religious principle among all classes of the French population; for, without this principle, I see not how a people can rise to any moral greatness, or do much for the human race. I wish to know if the accounts I have heard are true. Is Christianity classed by the great majority of thinking men in that country among exploded impostures? Is religion in all its forms neglected, contemned, and without power? Are those who are alive to its importance — for such there must be — so few and scattered as to exert no influence? Is Voltaire as much an oracle as formerly? I once thought him the truest expression of the French mind. Is he so still? I will not overpower you with questions.

* To M. J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi.

But an important one remains. From what means or efforts may a better state of things be hoped in France? What can be done for religion in that country? Your article on religion, translated by Miss Sedgwick, satisfies me that you sympathize with me in my interest in this subject, and I know you must have thought on it seriously. What, then, I repeat it, can be done? My remoteness exposes me to many errors; but I have a general conviction that Christianity is not to revive in France in any of its old forms. Catholicism is fallen, and so is Protestantism. In truth, the last was an antagonist to the first, a belligerent religion, framed to put down Rome, and so far was a great good. But its work is very much done, nor is it enough adapted to the present wants of the human mind to regain its power. A purer, higher form of Christianity is needed, such as will approve itself to men of profound thinking and feeling, as the real spring and most efficacious instrument of moral elevation, moral power, and disinterested love. If I may put another question, I would ask if there are any symptoms of this purer religion in France. Is the want of it beginning to be felt? St. Simonianism, as far as I know it, is a political engine, a worldly movement; not the struggling of the moral, religious, and immortal nature for freer action and a new development. The writings of Cousin and Constant give promise of a better state of things. Do they represent any considerable number of the thinking class? Can you name to me any intellectual men, interested in this subject, who would like to open a correspondence with me? Can you name any books which would enlighten me? Damiron's view of the French philosophy of the age I have read."

"*Boston*, June 29, 1831.* My highly valued friend, Miss Peabody, has read to me your letters in which you express a

* To M. le Baron Degerando, Paris.

wish to know something of the views of Christianity which prevail to a considerable extent in this part of our country, and I am encouraged by your language to hope that you may look with some interest into a volume which I have published, and which will give you the general features of this form of religion. I ought to observe, however, that what is here called Unitarianism, a very inadequate name, is characterized by nothing more than by the spirit of freedom and individuality. It has no established creed or symbol. Its friends think each for himself, and differ much from each other; so that my book, after all, will give you my mind rather than the dogmas of a sect.

"I am particularly gratified by this mode of introduction to you, because it may authorize a request which I have much at heart. There are few things which I desire more than to know with some accuracy the religious condition of France, the tendencies of the thinking part of society and of the mass of the people on this subject, and what are the views of good and intelligent men as to the best means of increasing the power of religion among you. France, from her geographical and political position, and from the immense moral influence which she is exerting, may be considered as the central power of Europe, and nothing discourages me more than the accounts which I often receive of the absence, the almost total want, of the religious principle among all classes of her population. Are these accounts true? Has France, as a nation, lost sight of man's connection with God, and with a future and higher existence? Is Christianity without honor and without power among you? Are there not signs of the revival of the religious principle? If so, what direction or form is it taking? Is any deep consciousness of the need of it springing up? I know that recent events have absorbed the people, nor ought any striking development of religious feeling to be expected under such circumstances. Still, a tendency to a better state

of things, if real and profound, will give some signs of its existence. I wish to propose another question, which, I trust, you will answer with entire frankness. It is, whether the views of religion given in my volume are in any degree suited to the wants and state of mind of any considerable class in France.

"I am not sorry to learn from your letters that the English sects meet little success in spreading their own forms of Christianity among you. They can give you only a poor form of religion. England has made little progress for some time past in the highest truths. Her missionaries, if listened to, would carry back France three centuries. I trust that religion, when it does return to you, is to spring up in a diviner form. I trust that France, after all her struggles for improvement, is not to resume the worn-out theology of the dark ages.

"You see to what object my mind chiefly turns. In the struggle of France for freedom, I have sympathized with her most fervently. But I wish for her a freedom worthy of the name, and this cannot be hoped for, unless it shall ally itself with a pure and rational religion. I will only add, that one part of my volume may not meet your full approbation. I refer to my remarks on Bonaparte. If I know myself, I wrote that article from a sincere interest in the cause of freedom and mankind. I may have erred, however, and if my errors are important enough to be exposed, I will thank any friend of truth to undertake the work."

"*December* 19, 1832.* I continue to look towards France with great interest. She must be roused sooner or later from her present indifference to a new action on the subject of religion, and this will have an immense influence on the progress of society. I am not at all discouraged by the

* To M. J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi.

failure of attempts to restore the antiquated systems of theology. I neither expect nor desire Christianity to revive in France under its old forms. Something better is needed. Christianity, I conceive, is to be reëstablished by clear developments of its original, essential truths. One of the great means of restoring it is, to disconnect it from its old forms, to break up the habit, almost universal in France, of identifying it with Catholicism and old Protestantism. Another means is, to show its harmony with the spirit of freedom, of philanthropy, of progress, and to show that these principles require, in order to their full expansion, the aid of Christianity. The identity of this religion with the most unconfined and self-sacrificing benevolence needs especially to be understood. No religion can now prevail which is not plainly seen to minister to our noblest sentiments and powers, and unless Christianity fulfils this condition, I cannot wish it success.

"With these views, I do not altogether acquiesce in what you think the duty of the friends of enlightened religion at the present moment. You think they must *wait*. If you mean that the time has not come for them to organize themselves into a new sect, I shall not differ from you. I doubt whether that time will ever come. I doubt whether the purified Christianity which I anticipate is to rise in the form of a sect or party, whether its friends are to distinguish themselves by any outward badge, or whether it is to make its way by the imposing efforts of masses. The age of symbols, of pompous worship, of the priesthood, and of overpowering religious combinations, is passing away. Religion must be spread more and more by rational means, that is, by the unfettered efforts of individual minds, by clear development of great truths, by moral suasion, and by examples of its sublime efficacy on the character and life. These means are always seasonable, and were never more needed than now. I expect, indeed, that they who receive this higher

manifestation of Christianity will be attracted to each other, and will unite their exertions as far as consists with perfect intellectual freedom. But their enlarged views and sympathies, and their reverence for the religion, will make them shrink from giving it a sectarian form."

"*Boston*, April 16, 1835.* My interest in the state and prospects of Europe is very strong, and I can rely so little on the discordant statements in the public prints, that I am very grateful for the views and impressions of intelligent friends of freedom and humanity residing on the spot. I hope for the world, but am not secure. I see grounds for alarm, in the strength which despotism derives from concentration and unity of action, in the divisions which necessarily spring up among men who think for themselves, and, above all, in the selfishness and factious views of the pretended friends of free institutions. To myself nothing is so discouraging as the want of moral and religious principle in France. I do not see how a profligate people is to lead the way to a better state of things, or how a free government is to be secure in a country where there are no grounds of mutual confidence, and no spring of self-sacrifice. I am looking with earnest desire for some manifestation of the religious sentiment in France. I have lately learned something of the Abbé Chatel's 'French Church,' but hope little or nothing from it. A new sect, to do good, must start with a profound faith, with deep conviction, with all-absorbing devotion to great truths. Religion, I suppose, perished in France chiefly from two causes, the corruptions of the Catholic Church, and a superficial, material philosophy. A purer church and a spiritual philosophy would do much to restore it. By a purer church, I mean a community, no matter how small, in which there would be a distinct manifestation of the

* To M. J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi.

peculiar power of Christianity to purify and ennoble human nature. Where can the materials be found? In Benjamin Constant and Cousin I have seen the promise of a *higher philosophy*. What may be hoped from this? Nothing has amazed and confounded me so much as the Abbé de la Mennais's late book, 'The Words of a Believer.' I cannot easily identify the author with the bigot who wrote on 'Religious Indifference.' He seems to write in good faith. How is he to be interpreted? Is he an example or proof of the general tendency of our age towards an unsettled state of mind? Is Catholicism itself unable to control this? I should be glad to know the influence of his book."

"*Boston*, March 29, 1832.* Your book is almost the only one I have read on the subject for years. If it would not savor of vanity, I should say that I have risen above the region of controversial theology. In proportion as the great moral, spiritual purpose of Christianity shines on my mind, the unintelligible mysteries of the schools fade away, and I can hardly muster up interest enough in them to read either for or against them."

"*Boston*, March 31, 1832.† I ought to have answered your letter of July before this. It gave me much pleasure, and I wish you could find time to write me many such. I have a deep and increasing interest in the state of society abroad, and you give me reason to hope for some account of the religious condition and prospects of your part of the world. I shall be glad to hear from you on this and all subjects. What is to come from the present agitation of your country, it is hard to say. I hope good from the shaking of men's minds through the civilized world. That great principles will be unsettled in some by the process, we

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie. † To Wm. Burns, Esq., Saltcoats.

know; but inveterate prejudices and abuses which would yield to no other influence will also be swept away."

"*Boston*, February 25, 1833.* You ought not to regret that your last years are given to such controversy. You are teaching us all the spirit in which controversy should be carried on, and you are laboring to vindicate the power of Him to whose glory every life should be dedicated. I trust you are to be spared to complete your other works. One thing is very gratifying, that theologians feel as never before the necessity of reconciling their systems to the perfections of God. They, indeed, adopt strange means for this end; but still, the spirit which is at work in these new and indefensible theories is a good one, and a sure presage of a brighter day."

"*Boston*, July 30, 1834.† Your letter by Dr. Tuckerman was very gratifying to me. I am glad that you have had an opportunity of seeing my two excellent friends, and of becoming acquainted with their worth. Perhaps these gentlemen have helped you to understand American Unitarianism better than you did before. They are fair specimens of our body in one respect. I think you must have been struck with the entire absence of a *sectarian spirit* in their habits of feeling and thinking, and it seems to me, that, with our many and great deficiencies, we may be said to be characterized by this feature. We look at Christianity very much as if no sect existed, and do not exaggerate the importance of certain doctrines because they distinguish us from others. The grand spiritual purpose of Christianity is, I trust, more and more felt among us, and one question is absorbing all others, namely, — How may our religion be administered so as to promote effectually its great end of regenerating the individual and the world?

* To Noah Worcester, D. D. † To Lant Carpenter, D. D.

'By this I do not mean that we are what we should be. A great change must be wrought in us, before we shall be thought worthy to do *much* for the redemption of mankind from error and sin. This, however, is reserved for those who shall have attained to the unworldly spirit and the all-sacrificing love of Christ and his Apostles. I think that I see some approaches towards this elevation of character; and the simplicity of mind with which we look at the religion is a good omen. Still, how much do we need, to fit us for the great work of giving a new life to the Church and the world!"

"*Boston*, April 5, 1837.* Nothing which a pure purpose prompts is lost. I am not discouraged by the signs of a growing bigotry. This is preparing its own downfall, by refusing to learn wisdom from the growing intelligence of the times. I have often observed how the weapons wielded by superstition in one age are turned against it in another. The Inquisition, once so terrible a defence of Rome, now inspires a horror which more than counteracts its past services. So the infallibility of that church, once an imposing plea, now does it infinite harm, by preventing it from disclaiming or modifying old errors. God and truth are mightier than all human devices. You see I am full of hope. I set up for no prophet, I fix no time for the millennium, but I see many good signs. There must be a period of struggle and suffering. But this does not dishearten me. To struggle and suffer in a good cause are greater privileges even than to triumph."

"*August* 23, 1837.† So the Quakers in England, as here, partake of the agitations of the age. I do not know a stronger proof of the revolutionary character of our times.

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie. † To Wm. Rathbone, Esq., Liverpool.

One would have thought a Quaker meeting one of the last fortresses to yield to innovation. We must be comforted at the disappearance of this sect, by thinking that it has done its work, that its most important principles have passed into the hands of more enlightened men, who will expound them more successfully. I grieve that any of their body should have fallen back into the Establishment. What would George Fox say, could he lift up his broad beaver, and see his followers returning to Mother Church, the mother of all abominations? I fear they have forgotten his favorite maxim, — 'Be not conformed to this world.' Perhaps a wise reform might have reconstructed Quakerism, so as to hold together the body; but I see sects die without much mourning. The time for all to die is coming."

"*September* 18, 1839.* I would that I could look to Unitarianism with more hope. But this system was, at its recent revival, a protest of the understanding against absurd dogmas, rather than the work of deep religious principle, and was early paralyzed by the mixture of a material philosophy, and fell too much into the hands of scholars and political reformers, and the consequence is a want of vitality and force which gives us little hope of its accomplishing much under its present auspices, or in its present form. When I tell you that no sect in this country has taken less interest in the slavery question, or is more inclined to conservatism, than our body, you will judge what may be expected from it. Whence is salvation to come? This is the question which springs up in my mind continually. Is the world to receive new impulse from individual reformers, or from new organizations? Or is the work to go on by a more silent, unorganized action of thought and great principles in the mass? Or are great convulsions, breaking up

* To J. Blanco White.

the present order of things, as in the fall of the Roman empire, needed to the introduction of a reform worthy of the name? Sometimes I fear the last, so rooted seem the corruptions of the Church and society. But I live in hope of milder processes."

"*Boston*, November 20, 1839.* I wish you would communicate more particulars about the new school of Oxford. The Church of England has seemed to me so dead, that I am interested by any sign of life, though it be a fever. I suppose, too, that the movement is in resistance of the material tendencies of the age, and in this way it may indicate a higher moral feeling, though it is too servile, too distrustful of the reason, too exclusively given up to the imagination, to promise any good. Is it a sudden burst, or has it grown up slowly?

"I wish to know the result of the Trinitarian controversy in Liverpool. I have read with pleasure two or three tracts of Mr. Martineau and Mr. Thom, and hope to see the whole. I was particularly struck with their freedom from cant, from popular appeals, with their noble faithfulness to their convictions, with their calm reliance on the power of truth. Did they produce immediate effects? If so, your city must have made no small progress, moral and intellectual. I do not subscribe to all the positions of these gentlemen; but I feel great respect for the power and spirit manifested in what I have read."

1839. "I live as did Simeon, in the hope of seeing a brighter day. I do see the gleams of dawn, and that ought to cheer me. I hope nothing from increased zeal in urging an imperfect, decaying form of Christianity. One higher, clearer view of religion rising on a single mind encourages

* To J. Blanco White.

me more than the organization of millions to repeat what has been repeated for ages with little effect. The individual here is mightier than the world, and I have the satisfaction of seeing aspirations after this purer truth. . . . . .

"I see little infidelity here, but much loose thinking. Not a few think that they pay homage to religious truth, by receiving it chiefly on the ground of its own excellence and glory, and very little on authority. The just limits of authority, indeed, and its proper office, need to be settled. The progress of religious inquiry is bringing this and other related questions into discussion, and we must all give what light we have. . . . . .

"I believe, — I trust, — that a better age of theological literature is dawning upon us. The human mind is beginning to throw off the weight of authority which has crushed it for ages, and although its first strength may be put forth in vehement wrestling with errors, in the subtilties of controversy, perhaps in rushing from one to another extreme, yet, if left to the free use of its powers and to the quickening influences which God is pouring upon it through nature, through events, through revelation, and through a more secret and inward energy, it will at length arrive, in one and another gifted individual, to that state of calm, intense, and deep meditation and feeling, from which all living and life-giving works on morals and religion are to proceed. One such work may be enough to give a new aspect to theology, to introduce modes of viewing and studying it as superior to those which now prevail as those are to the antiquated scholastic subtilties and jargon which once bore its name."

"*Boston*, April 13, 1840.* In a late letter I spoke to you of the Unitarian body in this country as having partaken the common indifference in regard to slavery, and as

* To J. Blanco White.

wanting the spirit of progress. As to the last point, I should have spoken with greater restraint. There are in the body individuals dissatisfied with the present, and anxious for higher manifestations of the truth and spirit of Christianity. The ministers deserve our great praise. They seem to me, as a body, remarkable for integrity, for the absence of intrigue, for superiority to all artifice. I think Unitarianism is administered among us with more zeal, earnestness, and will be more fruitful; though I expect no great reform, until Christianity is rescued from the errors, mists, corruptions, which have so long obscured and impaired it."

"*Boston*, September 11, 1840.* I owe you many thanks for the volume you so kindly sent me of the Liverpool Lectures. I had read a good part of the Lectures, but was glad to read the rest, and to own all. I have expressed to my English friends my admiration of these defences of the truth. I do not know how the cause could have fallen into better hands, or could have been more worthily maintained. Indeed, I ought to go farther, — I doubt whether the battle could have been fought as well elsewhere. . . . . They will lead a certain number to think, and will give them far higher views than they had before. They will stir up thought. They are suggesting, quickening, fertilizing, — and such are the writings which are to do good, not those which produce immediate superficial effect.

"I was glad that you did not undertake to defend any Unitarianism but your own. I know that in this way the benefit of authority is lost, and the unity of the sect is threatened; but what unity is of any worth, except the attraction subsisting among those who hold, not nominally, but really, not in words, but with profound conviction and love, the same great truths? I see in these Lectures the signs of a freer discus-

* To the Rev. J. H. Thom, Liverpool.

sion than we have had yet. As yet, controversialists who have broken all other chains have had a feeling of allegiance to their sect. Pure, supreme love of truth, how hard an acquisition! Perhaps our attachment to Christianity may sometimes blind us, by leading us to force meanings on its records which fall below the dignity of a revelation. It is no easy thing to let the records speak for themselves, to take them as we find them, to let them say what will injure their authority in the present state of men's minds. We 'rational Christians' are in danger of acting the part of their patrons, rather than their interpreters.

"There is another danger, too, to which we are exposed. We are more and more, and very properly, inclined to rest Christianity on the character, the spirit, the divine elevation of Jesus Christ; and the tendency of this is to beget a swollen way of speaking about him and his virtues, very inconsistent with the simple beauty and majesty of his character, and which is fitted to throw a glare over him, and not to present that distinct apprehension of him so necessary to a quickening and transforming love. It is an age of swelling words. I must plead guilty myself, and I am not sure that the Lectures are free from the offence. Indeed, to see and set forth Christianity in its simplicity is a hard task. Brought up as we have been, living in a most artificial, unchristian state of society, — the antithesis of the kingdom of heaven, — it is not easy to preserve and feel the force of any precept or truth of the religion. We must, by one or another means, escape the world we live in, — its hollow religious conventionalisms, its denial throughout of the worth of a human spirit, of the fraternal relation of all human beings, — before we can get a glimpse of the truth as it is in Jesus."

"*June* 22, 1840.* I can touch but on one topic more. You

* To Miss H. Martineau.

speak of your brother James. Since writing to you, I have read all his Lectures; and they seem to me among the noblest efforts of our times. They have quickened and instructed me. Indeed, his Lectures and Mr. Thom's give me new hope for the cause of truth in England. Not that I expect any great immediate effect; but noble spiritual action in a few is an augury of good which cannot fail. I differ, as I think I told you, from some of your brother's expositions; but no matter; I do not enjoy his mind the less."

"*September* 10, 1841.* Old Unitarianism must undergo important modification or developments. Thus I have felt for years. Though an advance on previous systems, and bearing some better fruits, it does not work deeply, it does not strike living springs in the soul. This is perfectly consistent with the profound piety of individuals of the body. But it cannot quicken and regenerate the world. No matter how reasonable it may be, if it is without *power*. Its history is singular. It began as a protest against the rejection of reason, — against mental slavery. It pledged itself to progress, as its life and end; but it has gradually grown stationary, and now we have a *Unitarian Orthodoxy*. Perhaps this is not to be wondered at or deplored, for all reforming bodies seem doomed to stop, in order to keep the ground, much or little, which they have gained. They become conservative, and out of them must spring new reformers, to be persecuted generally by the old. With these views, I watch all new movements with great interest."

"*Boston*, November, 1841.† That further inquiry will lead you to think as I do, I am by no means sure; but that it will modify your traditional belief, and give you clearer,

* To the Rev. James Martineau, Liverpool.
† To Mr. Harland Coultas, Malton.

more quickening views of Christianity, I cannot doubt. I seem to myself to be free from sectarian biases. That any existing sect should put down all others would be but a secondary good. What I feel is, that Christianity, as expounded by all our sects, is accomplishing its divine purpose most imperfectly, and that we want a reformation worthy of the name; that, instead of enslaving ourselves to any existing sect, we should seek, by a new cleansing of our hearts, and more earnestness of prayer, brighter, purer, more quickening views of Christianity.

"I value Unitarianism, not because I regard it as in itself a perfect system, but as freed from many great and pernicious errors of the older systems, as encouraging freedom of thought, as raising us above the despotism of the Church, and as breathing a mild and tolerant spirit into all the members of the Christian body. Methodism seems to me to have done much good; but I apprehend its day is drawing to a close. It is a system of ecclesiastical oppression. The concentration of power in the Conference is intolerable, and I see not how any free spirit can brook it. We are to be Christ's freemen, not instruments in the hands of our fellow-creatures. I owe so much to spiritual, Christian liberty myself, that I mourn over every infraction of it, and earnestly desire to secure it to all my Christian brethren.

"I wish you the best blessings from on high, the 'Spirit of Truth,' growing light, and growing love."

"*Philadelphia*, May 11, 1842.* Just as I was leaving Boston, I was told that there was an indisposition to aid ——'s church, on the ground of his peculiar views of the Christian ordinances. He believes in the fitness of a rite or service commemorating Christ's death, but wishes to omit the outward signs, believing that among us the letter inter-

* To N. L. Frothingham, D. D.

feres with the spirit, and that Christ regards the spirit alone. That assistance should be withheld on this ground from a church which has so many claims as ——'s is a cause of grief to me. . . . . .

"Have we no proof here that the Unitarian body is forsaking 'its first love'? Unitarianism was distinguished by its separation of the essential from the unessential in Christianity, by its clear discernment of the moral, spiritual purpose of this religion, and by its liberality and respect for the rights of individual judgment. To withhold aid and countenance from a church which agrees with us in these fundamentals, on account of its difference in a matter of form, and of its zeal, though excessive, for the essential and the spiritual in Christianity, is certainly no proof of the liberality to which we lay claim. The church in question contains within itself all the means of Christian edification, with the single exception, that it dispenses with certain symbols in a rite. Is this a difference to be thought of in such a case? Must our brethren be taught that on this point they must think and practise as we do, or forfeit our sympathy? Is this a ground on which to run up a wall of partition? Is this to be made a denominational fence by the friends of free inquiry?

"I can conceive of differences of opinion on the higher truths of religion so grave as to occasion us some perplexity as to giving aid to an infant church, — though even here our error should be on the side of liberality, and we should fear to lay fetters on the honest inquirer for truth. But in a matter of outward religion, where there is so much ground for diversity of judgment, and where such diversity touches nothing vital, I do fear that we prove ourselves 'carnal,' outward, earthly, unspiritual, and sectarian, when for such cause we deny sympathy and aid to single-hearted, earnest brethren, who are laboring to 'hold fast the light' under great discouragements, amidst the darkness of antiquated,

intolerant systems of theology. I beg you to think of this letter and make such use of it as you may judge proper."

Thus does it appear how truly Dr. Channing said of himself, — "I desire to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to live under the open sky, in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own ears, and following truth meekly, but resolutely, however arduous or solitary be the path in which she leads."* To him there was "one church, grander than all particular ones, however extensive, — spread over all lands, and one with the church in heaven, . . . . . the family of the pure in all worlds, . . . . . the innumerable multitude of the holy everywhere." With this church he felt bound by "vital, everlasting connection," and regarded himself as "a member of a vast spiritual community, as joint heir and fellow-worshipper with the goodly company of Christian heroes who have gone before."† The grand "heresy" to him was the substitution of any thing, "whether creed, or form, or church, for the *goodness* which is essentially, everlastingly, by its own nature, lovely, glorious, divine, . . . . . which is the sun of the spiritual universe, . . . . . which is God himself dwelling in the human soul." Growth in goodness was what he longed for throughout Christendom.

Let us now briefly describe the work, wherein, as we have seen, Dr. Channing so earnestly hoped to embody, with some degree of organic symmetry, the truths which, through long years, he had been assimilating. It was to

* Works, Vol. III., p. 211.
† Works, Vol. VI., pp. 203, 205, 208, 223, 224.

have borne the title, apparently, of "The Principles of Moral, Religious, and Political Science"; and the following extracts from a first draft of the Introduction will show the author's stand-point.

"In a work devoted to the exposition of moral, religious, and political truth, a minute description of all the principles and powers of human nature will not be expected. Volumes would be needed for the fit discussion of such a topic. The TRUE PERFECTION of man is the great idea of the moral sciences. His nature is therefore to be examined so as to determine its central law, and the end for which all religious and political institutions should be established; it is to be studied for the purpose of ascertaining its true proportions, its highest powers, the relations of its affections and faculties to each other, its ruling principles.

"In every department of nature we discern differences and varieties. The universe is not a monotonous repetition of one form of being. Each single object is composed of a variety of parts; each sustains various relations, exercises various functions, is receptive of various influences. Nor are all parts of equal importance; some are prominent, others subordinate; some essential, others accidental; some are ends, and others means. The same properties also are developed in an infinite variety of degrees. As each color presents an indefinite number of shades, so each power of living creatures is manifested with a like diversity of intenseness. In beings of the same class are found all possible differences in the degrees of their correspondence to the standard or type of the class. Thus nature everywhere reveals Variety, Difference, Relation, Degrees, Order, Perfection.

"That Human Nature should present to us a similar variety is to be expected from the analogies which are seen to pervade the universe. Man is not a single power, but a wonderful diversity of properties are combined in his consti-

tution. The laws which control the material world are in him conjoined with the energies of mind. That his various organs, faculties, functions, differ in importance, — that some are ends, while others are means, — that some are supreme and others subordinate, — that there is an Order or Harmony of powers in which consists the perfection of the human being, — may be confidently inferred from the laws of variety, degrees, order, which govern the universe. . . . . .

"All our inquiries in morals, religion, and politics must begin with human nature. The ends for which a being is made, his relations, his true course of conduct, depend upon his nature. To comprehend the former, we must understand the latter. Accordingly, certain views of man are involved in all speculations about the objects of life and the proper sphere of human action. On such views all schemes of society and legislation are built. Every great statesman, every reformer who has introduced a revolution in the affairs of nations, has been impelled and guided by his estimate of man. It is the want of a true science of our nature, that has vitiated all past systems of government, morals, and religion. No book can be written wisely, no plan wisely formed for the improvement of mankind, which has not its origin in just reverence of the powers of the human spirit. And not only is it true, that morals, religion, and politics, in their application to masses of men, must have their foundation in certain views of human nature; but every individual's principles, his whole system of duty, will take its character from the light in which he regards himself and his race. All the relations of life will wear different aspects to men who interpret differently the beings by whom they are sustained.

"Just views of human nature are, then, all-important. In comprehending man, we comprehend God, Duty, Life, Death, Providence; we have the key to the Divine administration of the world. In proportion as man is made known

to us, we learn why he was placed upon earth, and see the explanation of the discipline which is appointed to him here. The mysteries of his childhood, progress, and maturity, of his joys and sorrows, of his temptations and sins, gradually clear away. Even material nature becomes revealed to us in a new light. In proportion as we understand man, — God's greatest work, — we understand inferior creation; we discover new adaptations of the outward and the inward worlds, new analogies between nature and the human spirit; the Unity of the Universe dawns upon us."

Eight chapters only of the First Part of this work — which, in accordance with the preceding remarks, was devoted to an analytic and synthetic view of human nature — were composed. The order of their arrangement and their titles are as follows: — I. Sensation; II. Idea of Matter; III. Idea of the I or Self; IV. External Perception; V. Internal Perception; VI. Conception; VII. Memory; VIII. Discernment of Relations. The plan of the author was plainly to trace, by ascending degrees, the Order, Proportion, Harmony, of man's powers; and thus, by proceeding inward, from functions and relations which are most superficial and accidental, to those which are most central and essential, to exhibit an ideal of a perfect human being. It is scarcely necessary to inform a reader of Dr. Channing's writings, that he recognized as the supreme power in man the Conscience; and that he saw in this primal spring of moral energy an authoritative manifestation of absolute right, justly entitling it to be called the Oracle of God. Morality, in his view, flowed out from, and ascended up to, religion; the finite will was for ever newly animated from the Infinite Will; and goodness was the inspiration of the All-Good.

Thus from Man, the author would have been led to speak, in the Second Part of his work, of God, whom he saw revealed in human nature and the universe, as the One, Eternal, Infinite Person, whose essence and energy are love, the Heavenly Father, who creates all spirits in his own image, and continually recreates them by his inflowing life. Man he considered as actually a child of God, in exact proportion to the degree of the fulness and constancy of his communion with the Father of Spirits. The process of a progressive life he believed to be a perpetual regeneration. The end of man's destiny to which he should aspire was oneness with the Eternal Being; and in Jesus Christ — whatever his rank in creation and whatever his previous modes of existence — he saw with grateful trust and all-animating hope a manifestation of the glory to which man individually and collectively is welcomed.

Having thus in the central portion of his book presented the perfection of human nature in its unity with the Divine Being, as a reality, Dr. Channing would have passed in the Third Part to announce the laws of duty, personal and social, which necessarily proceed from the principles which he had established. In ethics and politics, as in religion, his leading aim was the spiritualization of man through the practical embodiment of Divine charity, in every relation of domestic, industrial, commercial, national life. He was assured that the law of love could be applied at once to the most comprehensive and most minute concerns of human intercourse. He anticipated with unfaltering faith the coming of an era of Universal Brotherhood, when freedom and order would be perfectly harmonized, and when mankind the earth round would

be united in one coöperative family of the children of God.*

Dr. Channing has been misapprehended alike by his admirers and critics, through the supposition, that he assumed to teach a much more definite system than he ever considered himself as having attained to. He left many views aside which others earnestly advocated, not because he *denied* them, but because he could not *verify* them. He had early learned to discriminate between truths and conjectures, and he was as conscientiously strict in his statement of the former as he was unrestrainedly free in speculating upon the latter. His soul was illuminated with the idea of the absolute, immutable glory of Moral Good ; and reverence for conscience is the key to his whole doctrine of human destiny and duty. Many difficult metaphysical points he passed wholly by, as being out of the sphere alike of intuition and of experience, and in relation to them was willing to confess his ignorance. He believed, to be sure, in the possibility of man's gaining some insight of Universal Order, and respected the lofty aspiration which prompts men to seek a perfect knowledge of the Divine Laws ; but he considered pretensions to Absolute Science as quite premature, saw more boastfulness than wisdom in ancient and modern schemes of philosophy, and was not a little amused at the complacent confidence with which quite evidently fallible theorists assumed to stand at the

* In so brief a sketch, it is of course impossible to do any justice to the views of Dr. Channing, but it is hoped, that in the volumes of Sermons and of Fragments, which the editor of these papers proposes hereafter to publish, something may be done to exhibit, with satisfactory completeness, his "principles of moral, religious, and political science."

centre, and to scan and depict the panorama of existence. For himself, he was content to wait.

Much of his correspondence is interesting, however, as revealing his habits of thought and inquiry, and enabling us to recognize his cherished views in relation to Man, the Divine Being, and Christianity. With ample extracts, therefore, from his letters upon theological and philosophical subjects, this chapter shall be closed.

"*November* 29, 1828.* I have read the book† you sent me with much interest. The phrenological part, I fear, did me little good. I have a strong aversion to theories which subject the mind to the body; and, believing this to be the effect of phrenology, I have not felt the obligation to study it, and, to say the truth, I am very ignorant of it. I have been instructed by your views of the laws of our nature, and of the connection between our obedience to them and our happiness. I respond joyfully to the hope you express of the progress of the human race, though I do not expect that any improvements of the race will exempt the individual from the necessity of struggle and self-denial in the formation of his own character, or will in any way do for him what every free being *must* do for himself. I was particularly gratified by the earnestness with which you insist on the supremacy of the moral faculties, and point out the inevitable miseries which society is to endure until this fundamental principle be recognized by the individual and the community.

"I send you a discourse recently published by me. You say, you are not of my persuasion. I hope this discourse, with all its defects, will show that I am devoted to no party, but that I would promote, to the extent of my

* To George Combe, Esq., Edinburgh.
† The Constitution of Man.

power, the cause of our common Christianity and of the human race.

"I am, with great regard, your friend."

"*Boston*, March 6, 1829.* The idea of death as separating us from the outward universe, and shutting us up in our own minds, seems to me quite the reverse of the truth. Revelation speaks very distinctly of another organization which we are to receive hereafter, and which I consider as a means of communication with all God's works. This doctrine seems to me very rational. There is a progression in every part of nature, and to suppose the mind to emerge from its present connection with gross matter to a purely spiritual existence is to imagine a violent transition, quite irreconcilable with this great principle. Death is not to separate the mind from matter, but, in the case of the virtuous, is to raise it from its present subjection to matter to a glorious triumph over it. I confess, I cannot think without depression of breaking all my ties to the material universe. When I think of its infinite extent, of the countless worlds which astronomy discloses to me, I feel that material nature, including all the beings connected with it, must offer infinite food for the mind, unbounded and inexhaustible discoveries of God. Then I find, that, just as fast as my mind unfolds, my delight in the universe increases; new correspondences are revealed between the inward and the outward world; a diviner light beams from the creation; a more thrilling voice comes from it. I cannot endure the thought of being severed from this harmonious and glorious universe. I expect death to multiply my connections with it, and to enlarge my knowledge of and power over it.

"Your friend would limit us to purely moral pleasures after death. Why so? One of the great excellences of

* To Miss Ruth P. Olney.

moral good is, that it aids us to enjoy all other good. The most perfect man is not he who confines himself to purely moral gratifications, but he who has a moral energy through which all things are received and enjoyed by him in a wise order and in just proportions. Other gratifications, thus controlled, become moral. In another world, our pleasures are to be diversified and multiplied. The outward creation — if on such a subject I may be allowed to speculate — will minister an increasing variety of exquisite sensations, of which sight and hearing are but types."

"*Portsmouth, R. I.*, July 25, 1829.* You want, you say, a better body. Our comfort is, that, in wearing out this body in well-doing, we are earning a better one; and perhaps the agency of the mind and of our present life in determining the future frame is greater than we imagine."

"*St. Croix, W. I.*; February 6, 1831.† I believe in this divine principle, this ray of divine light, in the soul. But instead of thinking it a *foreign* aid, I regard it as the very essence of the soul, the central principle of our nature, — so central, deep, and ineradicable, that all the appetites and passions are comparatively superficial. To bring the child to a consciousness of the divinity within him seems to me the highest office which parents and teachers can perform. He should be led to understand and feel that his moral nature — the principle which speaks of duty, which discerns the obligations of virtue, which carries in itself the presentiment of a moral government of the universe — is the voice of God, a light from heaven, an infinite germ, a power given him for endless development, and under which our whole nature is to be unfolded in health and beauty. I consider the knowledge of God as important, chiefly as it shows

* To Joseph Tuckerman, D. D. † To Miss Emily Taylor.

his intimate connection and constant communication with the soul, and thus awakens in us the consciousness of Divine relationship, of being formed for perpetual approach to God in his highest attributes. I consider Christianity as built upon and adapted to these views of human nature. Without the divine principle of which I have spoken, I can see no ground of accountableness, no capacity of religion, no need of the Gospel. To give this principle the victory over sin and all hostile influences is the very purpose of our religion. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Here we learn the true salvation and happiness achieved by faith."

"*St. Croix*, April 11, 1831.* I refer to your outlines of moral philosophy. Your opinions on this point of science seem to me very valuable. With many of them I entirely accord. That our physical nature has been too much overlooked by those who have treated it, I fully agree. That its end and means have been very imperfectly understood is equally true. It is my hope to do something in this field; and I should undoubtedly differ from you in some important particulars. You would place me among the 'abstract' authors who do not study and teach human nature 'practically,' and very possibly you would censure me with some reason. I earnestly wish that you would supply the defect by executing your own plan. You doubt your ability; but the conception of it shows that you have no reason for fear. . . . . The success of your 'Constitution of Man' in our country has been such as must gratify and reward you. It has found general favor. The Swedenborgians (who, in fact, republished it) are particularly interested in it, — why, I know not, for I read few of their books. I have heard of high commendation of it from a distinguished Calvinistic

* To George Combe, Esq.

divine; and as to the more liberal class, they have highly approved and recommended it. Some of its doctrines have found their way into the pulpit. I have met on this island a lady from America, of much distinction in the fashionable world, who had brought it with her as a text-book, and lent it very freely to the intelligent here. She tells me that a gentleman of Philadelphia bought fifty or a hundred copies of it — all he could find — for distribution, believing that he could not do more good. The common remark is, however, that the book is excellent in spite of its phrenology."

"*St. Croix, W. I.*, April 24, 1831.* I received sometime ago your aphorisms, entitled 'The New Era of Christianity,' and I hope you will not consider my delaying to answer your letter as any evidence of indifference to its object. It gives me great satisfaction to find men waking up anywhere to the present degraded state of Christianity, and thirsting and hoping for a purer form of it. I was the more interested in your communication from the circumstance of having read with great pleasure, and I hope profit, your dissertations on Methodism or Evangelical Religion, and on the Spirit of Christianity. I met with these accidentally, and sent for them to England, and have circulated them among my intelligent friends. I find much in your aphorisms to approve, and perhaps my objections, were I to make any, would apply to what I think their defects rather than to positive errors.

"I could wish that the *moral perfection*, which is the great aim of Christianity and the ultimate design of human existence, might be set forth in a more enlarged and exciting form. I could wish that the parental character of God might be taught more as a *moral relation* founded on the affinity of the Divine with the human mind, and having for

* To William Burns, Esq., Saltcoats, Scotland.

its end the elevation of the latter to greater and ever-increasing likeness to the former. I would have men taught that Jesus Christ has no other or greater good to give than the improvement of the human soul, than the communication of *his own virtue*, that goodness is essentially one and the same thing with heaven, and that every other good separated from this is delusive and worthless. One of the important evidences of Christianity, as yet hardly touched upon, should occupy a new place in the teaching by which the 'New Era' is to be introduced. The virtue which Christianity inculcates, and which was embodied in Christ, should be proved, as it has not been, to be or to constitute *the perfection of human nature*, or to involve the vigorous, harmonious, beneficent action of all its powers and affections. This adaptation of the religion to our spiritual nature, to its development, life, energy, peace, health, and perpetual growth, — this fitness and power of Christianity to connect us by endearing and generous bonds with God, and his whole rational offspring, so that we shall receive most and communicate most, or become living members of the 'whole family of heaven and earth,' — this, I think, is an evidence of the divine origin of our religion, particularly suited to its more advanced stages, and suited to give man the conviction so much needed, that Christian virtue is the supreme good to be sought, first for themselves and then for their race.

"Perhaps I owe to my views some better exposition, but you will probably understand in what respect I should modify your aphorisms. As I said, I see in them much to which I respond. What Christian virtue *is*, what the regeneration is which society needs, you have expressed justly, I think, as far as you have gone, and this is an immense point gained. I shall be truly happy to hear further from you, and to take part in the good work of carrying forward society. I am, however, not worth much as a laborer. I am now in the West Indies seeking health, and shall re-

turn to my country in a few days, with no great addition of strength.

"Very truly, your friend."

"*Rhode Island*, August 29, 1831.* If it will afford you any satisfaction, I ought to say that my views on the doctrine which you have examined were much the same with yours. At the same time I would add, that for years I have felt a decreased interest in settling the precise rank of Jesus Christ. The power of his character seems to me to lie in his spotless purity, his *moral perfection*, and not in the time during which he has existed. I have attached less importance to this point, from having learned that *all minds* are of *one family*, that the human and the angelic nature are essentially one. Holding this doctrine, I am not shocked as many are by the Humanitarian system. Still, it seems to me to labor under serious objections; nor am I at all influenced by the argument which its disciples insist upon so earnestly, that it brings Jesus nearer to us. His moral perfection seems to me his great peculiarity and separation from all human beings, and this remains the same on all systems, and is more inexplicable on the Humanitarian system than on any other."

"*Boston*, March 20th, 1832. That there must be a number ready to receive Christianity in the purest form in which it can be dispensed I cannot doubt. I am more and more satisfied that the policy which modifies Christianity to adapt it to the human mind is as unwise as it is irreligious. I wish men would go forth, strong in the faith that their best and profoundest views of religion, if brought out clearly and with the signs of strong conviction, will find prepared spirits. Christianity is founded on what is universal and

* To Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

everlasting in human nature. Our appeal must be made, not to wealth or temporary feelings, but to the moral consciousness of man, the consciousness of a spiritual and accountable nature. I have less and less faith in addressing religion to classes, or of setting it forth as the means of acting on and carrying them forward. It must be addressed to the individual soul, and be set forth as revealing the infinite worth, and as alone commensurate with the wants, of the soul. Each man should feel the greatness of his own spirit, — that it is so great as to justify all the mighty operations of Christianity, were there no other spirit which needed redemption. We are to go forth with a deep feeling of the unspeakable worth, wants, and perils of each soul, and awaken this consciousness in him that hears."

"*Boston*, March 30, 1832.* I suppose that my desire to express strongly the intimate connection between man and God leads me sometimes to use a mystical language, which seems to imply that I confound these beings. No one, however, can be less inclined to this form of mysticism than myself. I have friends who lean to Pantheism, with whom I often contend for our individual, distinct existence, and who would quite enjoy your misapprehension of my views. It seems that I 'spoke of the soul as divine,' by which I must have meant to express the affinity of its spiritual powers with the Divine nature, — to express particularly its capacity of sympathy with the moral perfections of God, of conforming itself to them without limit or end. This correspondence of the soul to God, this tendency to him, this sensibility to the good, the great, and the infinite, this principle of virtue or inward law, impelling to unbounded progress, I consider as the very *essence* of human nature, needing aid and culture, but still belonging to every soul, whilst

* To Miss Emily Taylor.

——, if I understand him, regards it as a *foreign* principle, something *added* to the mind by a mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit. I believe as much as your friend in the Divine influence. This surrounds us like the atmosphere. With an ineffable love to the soul, which God has made in his own image, he ministers to it, through the universe, through outward nature, society, providence, success, adversity, &c., and, still more, he communes with it, and acts in it *immediately*, but always according to its free and high nature, not to give it new elements, but to cherish and expand its original and infinite capacities, by furnishing objects and incitements to their appropriate action."

"*Boston*, March 31, 1832.* I have always inclined to the doctrine of the preëxistence of Christ, though I am not insensible to the weight of your objections. . . . . .

"My mind has long been turned from the controversy about Christ's person, as it is called, though I acknowledge its importance. His spirit, his distinguishing moral attributes, the purposes of his mission, — these topics are so interesting as to draw me from controversy. . . . . .

"You must show that the passages in the Epistles which are thought to teach other and higher doctrines than Jesus taught are in fact only different forms of the same truth, — and narrower forms, being adaptations of it to a particular age and very peculiar state of the Church. As long as men think they find in the Epistles great principles not communicated in the Gospels, the latter will pass only for initiatory teaching. Here, I apprehend, is the chief use of Biblical criticism, — not to disclose new truths, but to show that the darker parts of the New Testament, which belong almost wholly to the Epistles, contain the same doctrine with the simple and luminous teaching of Jesus."

* To William Burns, Esq.

"*Boston*, September 14, 1833.* Your letter of July, just received, gives me great pleasure. You do me justice in believing that your freest remarks would be acceptable. My consciousness of great defects is too strong to allow me to suffer much, even from unkind and malignant censure. For friendly criticism I have no feeling but gratitude. I must suppose myself open to the objections you have made, because others make them, perhaps most of my readers; and there must be a ground for general condemnation. I think, however, that I am substantially right, and that, whilst I may have exaggerated a truth, still the truth is most important, and needs to be brought out, as it has not yet been. You think that there is a tendency in men to idolize their moral powers, as they do the wealth and rank to which they are born. Here I must differ from you. I find almost universally in men a skepticism as to their moral power. I find almost all disposed to magnify the power of passion and temptation, to think themselves creatures of circumstances, to look on great moral progress as an impossibility, to shield themselves from remorse under their supposed weakness. I have seldom, perhaps never, met a human being who seemed to me conscious of what was in him. I never saw a man proud of his moral force, or boasting of having put it forth in resistance of temptation, and in striving for universal virtue. I have sometimes been almost inclined to wish that I could see this pride; for men are proud only of that to which they attach importance, and I have wanted some proof that any look on moral energy as the true dignity of the soul. Spiritual pride finds its chief nutriment, not in our moral powers, but in special communications from God, and spiritual influences. My grief at seeing men's self-contempt, at seeing their strange insensibility to the worth of their moral and intellectual powers, and their unconscious-

* To William Burns, Esq.

ness of what they may and ought to become, has induced me to insist as I have done on the topic which you think I have carried too far. I have earnestly desired to counteract what seems to me one of the most degrading effects of the false theology of this and past ages. This theology has labored without ceasing to break down human nature, to cover it with infamy, to destroy all confidence in its powers of reason and conscience, to crush its energy and hope, and has labored with such success that no human being is to be found just to himself. I have grieved to see how, for the purpose of exalting Christ's merits, the virtues which he came to form, and which are the great end of his mission, have been spoken of as of no account. I have grieved to see how religion, which means the adoration and imitation of the perfections of God, has been made to consist in speaking contemptuously of the nature he has given us, and in dark and desponding views of his administration. It has seemed to me that no foundation for a *moral* government has been left by the common doctrine of human weakness; for responsibility is diminished in the same proportion as power, and the solemnity of human life rests wholly on the greatness of the capacities and means of improvement now afforded us. It is under these impressions that I have written. I have felt as if the darkness thrown over human nature, by a corrupt theology, had made the multitude of men more ignorant of themselves than of any other part of God's works, and I have wished to do something towards revealing to them their own souls. All this I have now said, not to clear myself from the charge of overstating the truth, which is very possible, but because I fear that you, my dear Sir, do not sufficiently feel how terrible has been, and is, the moral discouragement, despondence, debasement, produced by the popular views of man's state.

"As to your other principal objection, that I have not insisted on *Divine influence* as I should have done, I know

that I have not given my views at length, but I hope that I have not in this way led to false conclusions. I have waited to get clearer views. I believe in man's dependence on God's influence, and *direct* influence, and this is *all* my hope; but man's dependence is that of a *moral*, *responsible* being, and must not be confounded with that of passive matter. It is only by using the power we have that we can gain new aids from Heaven, and these aids will be made effectual only by our own faithful use of them. The essence of prayer is desire, and to pray for God's spirit is to desire and choose virtue, holiness, as our supreme good; so that in the promise of the Spirit to prayer, the great moral principle of the Divine administration is adhered to. 'To him that hath shall be given.' The common modes of speaking of prayer, as if it were mere asking, or did not include moral effort, seem to me very pernicious. . . . . The place you ascribe to benevolence in Christianity and in the progress of society is the true one.

"After a year's idleness, I am beginning to be good for something, and shall be most grateful to God for strength to do a little more for truth and human nature before I leave the world."

"*Newport*, August 29, 1834. I am truly sorry to find you oppressed with such difficulties. I have long since left them behind me, and they have no more influence on my faith than a breath of wind on a rock. I have time now only for one or two remarks.

"That Jesus was *the* Christ, *the* Anointed, *the* Commissioned, — that these titles belonged to him preëminently and as to no other, — is very plain. The question is, whether his coming was predicted. Now it seems to me very plain that a higher, spiritual, universal religion is again and again predicted. The Old Testament looks forward to this continually. In other words, Christianity was foretold. From the

very nature of this change, it required to be introduced by a divinely commissioned *minister*, by a spiritual head and leader, and this work is again and again ascribed in the prophecies to an *individual*. It is true that these prophecies are complicated with predictions of nearer deliverances of the Jews, so that they are said by objectors to refer to what preceded Christianity. But they certainly were not fulfilled previously, and if we suppose that the great Deliverer was not only to enlighten the world, but to bless the Jews in particular, we can understand why this latter work should be spoken of in language drawn from the ancient relations of the Jews to surrounding nations. From the nature of the work ascribed to the servant of the Lord, I suppose an individual to be meant. Any other explanation of the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah seems to me forced and unnatural. As to the coming of Christ, spoken of in the New Testament, nothing is plainer than that the coming of his *power*, *influence*, reign, was the primary idea; that of a personal coming but secondary, or an envelope of the first. A personal coming without power or influence would have been a disappointment of every hope excited by the phrase. Christ's coming and the coming of his kingdom were synonymous, and he gave the key, when he said, 'My kingdom is not of the world, is within you,' &c. These phrases were all prophetic, and the language of prophecy was highly poetical, addressed to imagination and hope, enveloping the great thought under adjuncts or signs, indicating the effect by the cause, and the reverse, &c. That the Apostles were not inspired to interpret the prophecies is believed by many. If your objections are allowed to be valid in their full extent, they might prove the same to be true of Jesus, — a conclusion which almost all would repel, — but they would not invalidate the great proofs of his mission, nor at all affect the character of his religion. — I hope you can read, for I cannot stop to correct."

"*Boston*, January 19, 1835.* My views in regard to future punishment were not given very distinctly, as you observe, nor have I inquired into the subject, perhaps, as thoroughly as I should have done. I have rested in the general conclusion, that the Scriptures intend only to give us strong impressions of the moral consequences of the characters we form here, that their language on the subject of the future life has the boldness of the prophetic style, and that we are in danger of error when we attempt to gather from it any precise views of the condition of the wicked. The mercy to be exercised hereafter — if such there be, and we hope there will be — will be revealed in due time, and we can see why the annunciation of it now would not suit our present condition. Under these convictions, I have not felt that I was called as a Christian minister to speak of future punishment but in the indefinite manner of which you take notice. My opponents have charged Universalism on me very stoutly, but I have not thought it worth my while to set them right. . . . . .

"In regard to the *Atonement* I have thought much, and hope one day to give my views to the public. The great question is, What is the *nature* of the *connection* between the death of Christ and human forgiveness? That Orthodoxy has erred on this point may be made plainer, I think, than has yet been done. That a theory so wanting in Scriptural proof should have taken so wide and strong a hold on the Christian world is very remarkable. A thorough work on this subject would be the most important contribution which could be made to theology, and the greatest benefaction to the Church."

"*Boston*, January 19, 1835.† I thank you for the vol-

* To the Rev. George Armstrong.

† To the Rev. D. Thom, Liverpool.

umes you kindly sent me on 'The Assurance of Faith.' I read them with interest and pleasure, that is, with the pleasure which we receive from seeing great subjects treated with earnestness and ability. I need not tell you that I differ from you, but sometimes I am more benefited by the works of opponents than of friends. Perhaps I ought not to speak of myself as differing from you essentially. I hold the doctrine of Assurance as strongly as you. I am sure of God's love to every human being; but believing as I do in man's moral freedom, and regarding this as giving a character to the whole Divine administration towards him, the government of God cannot present itself under the same aspects to my mind as to yours. If I may be allowed one criticism, I would express my sorrow at the tones of asperity you have used towards your opponents. How can we help seeing true piety in those who differ from us? And how should we rejoice to see it! I was pleased to learn through your book something of Barclay, of whom I had never heard. I do not wonder that as a Calvinist he should have come to the conclusion in which he rested, and I am still less surprised that Calvinism in your case should have issued in Universalism. The absurdities of common Calvinism are so frightful, that the wonder is how any can adhere to them.

"Very truly, yours."

"*Newport*, September 20, 1835. I am not surprised that you think often of your relations to God and to a future life. The wonder is how any human being can live without perpetual recurrence to these inspiring, elevating subjects. We need them at once to strengthen our virtue and cheer our toils and sufferings, to give moral courage and unfailing hope. You say you believe in God, in virtue, in immortality; may every day give strength to this faith! There is no inheritance I desire so much to leave you, and the way

to build up and enlarge your faith is plain. It is not so much the way of reasoning, — though I wish you to use your reason on all subjects, — but the way of obedience to all known duty. To fix in our minds the conviction of any great truth, we must act upon it, be faithful to it. Reason without an obedient spirit is a blind guide. He who forsakes virtue gradually loses the perception of its beauty, and begins to doubt its reality, the very worst form of skepticism. To those who transgress the pure laws of God, faith in him becomes little more than a name. You are so happy now as to recognize the sublimest principles. I pray you to be faithful to them. If you are living in one habit which your Creator and your conscience forbid, renounce, resist it, as the enemy of all that is true as well as of all that is holy within you. I want you to put such entire confidence in duty, that you will follow it immediately, without fear, without calculation; and with this simple love of the right and the good, truth will shine more and more into your understanding, and will raise you to nobler virtues. The doubts which you express as to Christianity are founded in misapprehension. There is no reason whatever for supposing the religion to have changed, since it came from Christ. The books of the New Testament have come down to us as they were originally written, or the exceptions are so few as to deserve no notice. Probably no ancient writings have reached us with so few changes. The reason is, that the copies of the books of the New Testament were so multiplied and so soon spread over all countries, — they were so soon translated into various languages, and were quoted so copiously, — that we have more means of determining the original text than in the case of any other books. . . . . On this subject I cannot have any solicitude about you. The more you know of Christianity, the more you must put faith in it, unless, indeed, you resist its pure spirit, — which God forbid!"

"*Boston*, April 4th, 1837. I feel that among Liberal Christians the preaching has been too vague, has wanted unity, has scattered attention too much. In my own labors there has been more unity, perhaps in consequence of the strong hold which one sublime idea has taken of my mind. This is, the greatness of the soul, its divinity, its union with God, — not by passive dependence, but by spiritual likeness, — its receptiveness of his spirit, its self-forming power, its destination to ineffable glory, its immortality. This great view binds together all other truth. I think of God as the Father and Inspirer of the soul, of Christ as its redeemer and model, of Christianity as given to enlighten, perfect, and glorify it, of the universe as its school, nutriment, teacher, of all outward beauty as its emblem, of life as appointed for its discipline, and death for its passage to a higher being, of heaven as its perfection, of hell as its ruin. I understand the love which passeth knowledge, when I consider that God looks, as none other can do, into the soul, and comprehends its greatness, perils, and destiny. Love to God seems to me to be founded not on his outward benefits, but on regard to him as the Father of the spirit, present to it, dwelling in it, calling it by conscience and by his providence to perfection, to himself. Love to man has no foundation but in the comprehension of his spiritual nature and of his spiritual connection with God. To awaken men to what is within them, to help them to understand the infinite treasure of their own souls, — such seems to me the object which is ever to be kept in sight. This is an entirely different thing from filling their heads with vague notions about human dignity. What we want is, to awaken in them a consciousness of their own nature, and of the intimate relation which it establishes between them and God, and to rouse their whole energy to the work of their own redemption and perfection. A sense of responsibleness, thus formed, will be at once most rational and quickening. It

is very possible that I have been too exclusive in my views, and I have not given this account of myself for your blind imitation. I feel, however, that preaching which is to do good must have its great idea. Christianity undoubtedly has such an idea. This will be revealed to different minds under a variety corresponding to their various peculiarities. It will not produce monotony. Each man will be himself, and no other."

"*Boston*, May 4, 1838.* Your last letter, which I received in January, deserved an earlier answer, for it overflowed with the kindest feeling; but, like yourself, I have suffered for some time from indisposition, which has taken away my energies, so that it is an effort to put even these few lines on paper. I have wanted to write you the more, because Mr. Ripley has put into my hands your long letter, and this started a thousand thoughts which I wished to communicate. How much it would gratify me to visit you, and to receive your views from your own lips! I found that I differed from many of the opinions you expressed to Mr. Ripley. I do not see the necessary connection between inspiration and infallibleness. Inspiration is but one of many methods of teaching, and a method which does not at all subvert the principles of our nature; and this nature is imperfect, erring, incapable of comprehending *any* truth thoroughly, unable to comprehend *moral* truth beyond its own degree of purity, and compelled, if I may so say, by the law of mental association, to blend its errors with the better views it has attained. Man may learn much under God's ordinary and extraordinary modes of instruction; but the history of the Apostles under Christ's teaching shows us, that under the happiest auspices, under miraculous aids, man still conforms to the laws of his present infant stage of be-

* To J. Blanco White.

ing. The notion has been, that the infallibleness of the Apostles was necessary in order to the protection of their converts from error. But this protection is an impossible thing, and cannot therefore be the end of Divine arrangement. No teacher can secure his pupils from error, can impart his mind *perfectly* to others. Our reception of the thoughts of a higher mind must be proportioned to our capacity, our preconceptions, our moral progress. The very circumstance, that men are taught by *words*, makes a mixture of error necessary; for different ideas are more or less associated with words in different minds. How little did Christ's disciples understand him whilst he was with them! And were the Apostles able to protect their converts from error? How immediately was Christianity obscured by the Jewish and heathen notions of its first professors! Undoubtedly, inspiration, as well as outward means, may communicate most precious light; but are we obliged to think the light unmixed with darkness? I apprehend much error has arisen from heathen notions of inspiration, as if it transported a man beyond himself, suspended his faculties, &c. This is not only at war with reason, but contradicted by the New Testament. So the value of inspiration to the recipient has been exaggerated, as if it made him more than mortal. To me, it seems a higher act to arrive at a great truth through the development of our own rational and moral nature, than to be taught this truth authoritatively by another. These are very hasty suggestions, but I think they will meet some of your difficulties. As to your objection, that men cannot be commanded to believe Christianity, on the ground of external evidence, I reply that such evidence *alone* is not the ground on which belief should be founded. I will only add, that you seem to make faith too much an intellectual exercise, an assent to propositions. I regard it much more as a spiritual aspiration, a thirst for perfection, a trust in Christ as commissioned by God to guide us to perfection, to

inward, moral, celestial, and eternal life. I can add no more: let me only ask, if there is not an important difference of opinion between the letter to Mr. Ripley, and 'The Law of Libel reconsidered.' Will you allow me to say, that I was pained by the thought, that you might lose some of the supports and strength which we especially need as we approach the end of life. You will say, that we must think of *truth* alone. But are we not to see one impress of truth on doctrines, in their adaptation to the highest wants of our nature? I write in great haste, and from an impulse which I know you will appreciate. It will give me great pleasure to hear that you are gaining strength, and able still to employ your powers for your own enjoyment and the good of your fellow-beings. — On looking over my letter, I feel how imperfect it is; but such is my confidence in you, that I send it, for I know not when I can write another.

"Very respectfully, your sincere friend."

"*Boston*, February 11, 1839.* I have delayed answering your letter, simply because I have felt that it demanded a good deal of thought, and it so happens that my capacity of thought is so taxed by subjects which crowd on me every day, that I seldom find time for those which I put off to a more convenient season. You remember the story told of Simonides, who was to give his idea of God at a certain time. When the day came, he desired a longer season for meditation, and then a still longer one, and the more he thought, the more he felt the need of eternity to comprehend the Eternal. Your questions would bring with them the same consciousness, were I to undertake to give them a formal answer. Happily, I am stirred up by an opportunity to write without any effort at regular arrangement of my ideas. I am afraid nothing else would secure to you an answer, if, indeed, the answer should be worth your getting.

* To Rev. George F. Simmons.

"You wish to know what manifestations of God bring him nearest to us, by what views of him a profound, fervent devotion to him may be awakened and cherished. It seems to me very plain, that nature, which you look to with so much hope, is not and cannot be the primary or chief source of our ideas of God, or the great means of our communication with him. Nature, indeed, shows design; but the idea of design we learn wholly from our own souls. These are our great teachers of God. God is a spirit, and his spiritual offspring carry the primary revelation of him in their own nature. His attributes are first made known to us by the shadows or emanations of them in ourselves. The Godlike within is the primary revelation of God. Outward nature cannot, of itself, teach him, for it does not manifest to us the Ultimate, or the End, of the Creator. It is a vast apparatus of means. But the final, supreme good it does not teach, and yet it is the end of the Creator which determines his character and manifests his glory.

"It is a fact, too, that science has not made nature as expressive of God in the first instance, or to the beginner in religion, as it was in earlier times. Science reveals a rigid, immutable order; and this to common minds looks much like self-subsistence, and does not manifest intelligence, which is full of life, variety, and progressive operation. Men in the days of their ignorance saw an immediate Divinity accomplishing an immediate purpose, or expressing an immediate feeling, in every sudden, striking change of nature,— in a storm, the flight of a bird, &c., — and nature thus interpreted became the sign of a present, deeply interested Deity. Science undoubtedly brings vast aids, but to prepared minds, to those who have begun in another school. The greatest aid it yields consists in the revelation it makes of the Infinite. It aids us not so much by showing us marks of design in this or that particular thing as by showing the *Infinite* in the finite. In this I mean nothing mystical.

God is the Infinite Spirit. We know him only when we see and revere him as such. Nothing declares him, but what is a sign, shadow, expression, of his infinity. Science does this office when it unfolds to us the unity of the universe, which thus becomes the sign, efflux, of one unbounded intelligence, — when it reveals to us in every work of nature infinite connections, the influences of all-pervading laws, — when it shows us in each thing unfathomable, unsearchable depths, to which our intelligence is altogether unequal. Thus nature explored by science is a witness of the Infinite. It is also a witness to the same truth by its beauty; for what is so undefined, mysterious, as beauty?

"Still, it is not by nature that we first approach God, nor does this constitute our great tie to him. I am not unjust to it, for I live in and by its light. But without a higher revelation than itself, it would be dark and voiceless. We must look for God in our own souls. From the very nature of spirit, it must be the chief expression of the spiritual Father. And this is not all. It is the prerogative of the soul to discern the ultimate, the supreme good, — that for which man and all things are made; and it is only by knowledge of the ultimate that we can truly know God. This revelation is made by the moral principle within us. It is the glory of this principle, that it perceives that which is good in itself, immutably good, to which every thing else is to be sacrificed. It discerns the everlasting law to which the whole spiritual world is subjected, and which is the essence and law of God himself. The moral principle brings God nigh to us as no other can. Its authority becomes representative to us of a higher authority. It speaks in a higher name than its own. It looks up to a judge above itself. It teaches us, when we do wrong, that a purer eye than our own sees us. Still more, it wants such a being as God to strengthen it in its weakness, to aid it in realizing its ideas of perfection, and to be the object of its love and reverence.

"The moral nature is man's great tie to the Divinity. If so, there is but one mode of approach to God. It is by faithfulness to the inward, everlasting law. All other means are vain. We may study till our eyes are blind and our brains dizzy, but we shall not take a step towards God till we begin to resist the evil within us, and to make the Divine will our supreme law. The pure in heart see God. Here is the true way to God. We prefer speculation and outward means. But self-denial, the path rough at first, but soon flowery, alone guides to him. In proportion as we obey and feel the *reality* of virtue, we feel the *reality* of its *source*. We feel that it comes from above. We identify it with God. A conviction springs up that he is *working within* us. Our holy aspirations and efforts are seen by a kind of intuition to be his motions in us. We feel our alliance with him and understand him by sympathy. In proportion as we conquer evil within us, our idea of perfection rises, and we thirst more for his aid to ascend to it, and this thirst becomes spontaneous, free, fervent prayer. In proportion as we improve, we gain a practical proof of his infinite interest in us, we feel that he has given us his best gift, and faith founded on experience grows more and more immovable.

"This purification of the heart also prepares us to turn all nature to account. It is our sensuality which makes nature so profitless to us in religion. To the man of the senses, nature is something substantial, the only reality. It subsists to him by its own power. As the senses lose their power over us, nature loses its rigid self-subsistence. The spirit within it, and of which it is the veil and shadow, shines out. We look on it as a phenomenon, and pierce beneath the surface to the deep, infinite power of which it is the mere sign and instrument. This is a mysterious change, which only experience can comprehend. Still more, the principle of Love, that unbounded spirit which seeks union

with all things, and which is the end of all moral effort, opens to us the *infinity*, the *unity*, and the *beauty* of the universe as science cannot, and makes it radiant with the Divinity.

"But I have said enough. I have much, much to add; but you get my ideas of access to God, and you will easily see how Christ is the way to God, as he awakens the moral energies of the soul, by which it is borne upward to the Father, and as he is the brightest spiritual manifestation of the Father."

"*Boston*, November 20, 1839.* I cannot agree with every part of your letter. You seem to me to make religion too exclusively a product of the reason, and carry your jealousy of the imagination too far, though such jealousy is most natural in one bred to Catholicism. If imagination had no office but to give material forms to God and heaven, I should agree with you; but is it not the function of this glorious faculty to see in the universe a type of the Divinity, in the sun a shadow of his glory, in the beautiful, sublime, and awful forms of nature the signs of spiritual beauty and power? Is not the imagination the principle which tends to the Ideal, which rises above the finite and existent, which conceives of the Perfect, of what eye hath not seen or ear heard? I suppose we differ chiefly in words. I consider religion, however, as founded in the joint operation of all our powers, as revealed by the reason, the imagination, and the moral sentiments. I think, too, you speak too disparagingly of historical Christianity, though here, also, I may misapprehend you. To me the history of Christianity in the Gospels is inestimable. The life, spirit, works, and character of Jesus Christ are to me the brightest revelations of his truth. I know no histories to be compared with the Gospels in

* To J. Blanco White.

marks of truth, in pregnancy of meaning, in quickening power. I attach great importance to the miracles. They have a vital union with the religion, are full of it, and marvellously adapted to it. They are not anomalous, arbitrary events. I have no faith in abstract, insulated, purposeless miracles, which, indeed, are morally impossible; but the miracles of Christ belong to him, complete the manifestation of him, are in harmony with his truth, and at once give to it, and receive from it, confirmation. I should pay little heed to a narrative, from ever so many hands, of the resurrection of a low-minded man, who had died for no end, and had risen, according to the story, to lead as low a life as before. But the *resurrection of Christ*, related as it is to his character and religion, taught and sealed with blood by the grand reformers of the race, and recorded as it is in the Gospels, is a fact which comes to me with a certainty which I find in few ancient histories. The evidence of such miracles as accompanied Christianity seems to me precisely suited to the moral wants of men in present and past times, that is, to a stage where the moral development is sufficient to discern more or less of divinity in Christian truth, but not sufficient to produce full, earnest faith. I need miracles less now than formerly. But could I have got where I am, had not miracles entered into the past history of the world?

"Another topic about which I may have misapprehended you is *supernaturalism*. I doubt if I know what you mean by it; but I have not room to write about it. I will only say, that I have no sympathy with those who disparage *the natural*. Nature, in its broad sense, as meaning the created universe, with its order and law, becomes more and more sacred, divine, in my sight. But a letter would not hold what I might say here. Your true meaning I should like to get."

"*Boston*, November 29, 1839.* The personification of moral evil seems to me a more serious matter than to you; for the result is, that people come to fear the *person* and his *power* more than *moral evil* itself; and whenever the conception of him becomes more vivid, the moral perceptions are almost lost in selfish dread. I sometimes think that the Devil has been a more formidable object to the English race than to the Continental Christians. Luther called him caitiff, threw an inkstand at him, and tells us that he found no way of driving him off so effectual as laughing at him. Satan was evidently a poor creature in Luther's notion. He could not stand a sneer. Did Milton make him more terrible? I know nothing of the history of this conception in later times. I meet no explanation of the references to Satan in our Saviour's history which satisfies me. The whole subject is a perplexing one, and, as it does not enter into the essence of Christianity, I have for a long time ceased to think about it. . . .

"The part of your discourse which gave me the sincerest delight, and for which I would especially thank you, is that in which you protest against the doctrine of philosophical necessity. Nothing for a long time has given me so much pleasure. I have felt that that doctrine, with its natural connections, was a millstone round the neck of Unitarianism in England. I know no one who has so clearly and strongly pointed out as yourself its inconsistency with moral sentiments in God, and with the exercise of moral sentiments towards him by his creatures. I have always lamented that Dr. Priestley's authority had fastened this doctrine on his followers.

"—— has spoken of me as using *patronizing* language towards Dr. Priestley. I must be strangely wanting in humility, if I did not feel my great inferiority to that extraordi-

* To the Rev. James Martineau.

nary man, or if I could think of him as needing my patronage. The truth is, that I could never speak of him without qualification, in consequence of my deep conviction of injury done to the cause of truth by his speculations on the moral nature of man, reaching, as they must do, to the moral nature of God."

"*Boston*, November 2, 1840. If ever a being understood himself, it was Jesus Christ. He was entirely free from the self-partiality by which men are so often blinded to their destiny. His profound humility must have guarded him from all extravagance of conception and hope. His clear, bright perceptions of the Divinity and of human duty and perfection were signs of consummate wisdom, of an unclouded reason, of a sound, healthful mind. He was nothing of an enthusiast in the common sense of the word, no dreamer. There was no passion in his views of life, of the evils he was to overcome, of the good he was to accomplish. He was calm, authoritative, self-possessed, singularly just in his appreciation of men and things, and had always the tone of a man dealing with realities. I cannot explain his sublime yet calm consciousness of his end and destiny, — the wonderful grandeur, and, at the same time, the simplicity and naturalness with which he expressed it, — the serene assurance with which he looked forward to his death, and to the triumph of his cause in future ages, under the humble ministry of his disciples, — by any thing but the admission of the truth of his convictions.

"This conception of the Christ was his own, — so remote from that of his nation, that it could not have been borrowed. Undoubtedly, there were Jews who looked forward to a moral change under the Messiah; but he was to extend religion under the form of Judaism, to spread the law of Moses, and Judea was to sit on the throne of the world. The idea of a purely spiritual reign, the chief ministers of

which were to be the last and least, and servants of all men, — to be persecuted, martyred, — was, as I conceive, altogether his own, and wholly inexplicable by outward influences. Above all, the idea, that this kingdom was to rise on the ruins of Judea and all Jewish hope, shows the entire separation of Christ's mind from all around him. It is very remarkable, that, in his prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, he introduces no prophecy of its restoration, and of the future glory of the Jewish people. Nothing can show more clearly that Christ did not derive his idea from the prophets, for the grand idea of the prophets is the glory of Zion. Her desolations and humiliations, however they opened on the ancient seers, always had an end, and the prophets seemed unable to find full utterance for the glory that was to follow. How entirely Jesus rose above every thing local and temporary! 'Ye shall neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem worship the Father.' How anxious was he to comprehend the Samaritan and heathen in his charity!

"As to the prophecies, I acknowledge that an obscurity hangs over the application of many to Christ, which are cited as fulfilled in him. I rest on a few general views. There are clear predictions in the Old Testament of the recovery of the world to God's worship, and intimations of a distinguished individual by whom the work was to be done, — and, indeed, the last was implied in the first, for great revolutions imply a leader. By these general views I explain Christ's references to the prophecies.

"As to his biographers, they speak for themselves. Never were more simple and honest ones. They show us that none in connection with Christ could give any aid to his conception, for they do not receive it. If in any respect they have unconsciously misrepresented him, it must have been by *letting down* his idea, by seizing on apparent Jewish views; for with such they must have sympathized most

readily. They have not exaggerated his grand peculiarity. How can we read them, and not see that they give us a real being? and if so, how can we escape his miracles? and these give us additional assurance of the justness of Christ's conviction."

"*Boston*, November 8, 1840. I did not insist in my last on the correspondence of the event with Christ's prophetic conviction of his having come to accomplish the great moral revolution which had been foretold. How has his word been fulfilled, and fulfilled under circumstances the most unpropitious! The poor son of the Nazarene carpenter, with an imagination so exalted as to clothe him with an unreal, miraculous glory, was not the man to conflict successfully with the array of the strongest human passion, prejudice, pride, interests, — with the whole strength of the civil and priestly powers, — with all the institutions of society. In the Gospels we read of the obstacles he had to encounter in the minds of his chosen companions, and the internal evidence of this part of the records is very strong. What could such men accomplish after their Master's death, amidst the deep agony of their disappointment, if he did not indeed rise again, — if the dark mystery of his death was unrevealed, — if no succour, no higher illumination, were afforded them from God? According to your view, Christianity stands in the history of the race as a fact wholly unexplained and inexplicable; and the difficulty arising from the obscurity of the old prophecies seems as the dust of the balance in comparison.

"The Gospels are to me their own evidence. They are simple records of a being who could not have been invented, and the miraculous and more common parts of his life so hang together, are so permeated by the same spirit, are so plainly outgoings of one and the same man, that I see not how we can admit one without the other. I have no

difficulty in receiving the miracles, for they belong to the man, they are in harmony with a character which stands so separate from our common humanity, they form a beautiful whole. That there are difficulties I feel, and I am in the habit of letting them pass; and in so doing, my idea of Christianity is not at all touched or obscured. There is an amount of evidence which satisfies me that the solution of the difficulty will come sooner or later."

"*May* 8, 1841.* You speak generally of Christ as the Shekinah, but sometimes of the Shekinah as the shadow of Christ. He is the substance. In him 'the symbol was substantiated.' This doctrine meets my views precisely. The Shekinah was a glorious type, symbol, of Christ. Both were manifestations of God; the former material or sensible, the latter spiritual. The former truly preshadowed the latter. But the shadow and substance are not the same; and yet the identity of Christ and the Shekinah seems to be your doctrine."

"*Newport, R. I.*, July 12, 1841.† I received, a day or two ago, your letter, and hasten to reply to it. The subject is of great interest, and I am truly gratified to find you pursuing it with so single a love of truth. I read but little of the theology of the day, on account of the plain proof given by writers that they are communicating other men's thoughts, not their own. Where I meet the signs of an honest seeking for truth, my interest is awakened, no matter whether the author arrives at the same results with myself or not.

"I wish to understand precisely your view of the Shekinah, and of the relation borne to it by Jesus Christ. I suppose I receive your meaning, when you speak of the Shekinah as the symbol, representative, embodiment, of Je-

* To Professor George Bush. † Ibid.

hovah. But when you speak of the symbol as substantiated in Jesus Christ, or in human flesh, and of this glory of God dwelling in him, do you intend that the very light, 'unwrapped splendor,' 'enshrined glory,' on which the eyes of the Israelites rested, dwelt beneath the veil of his flesh, — that this was disclosed on the mount of transfiguration? Your language seems to imply that the very visible light which moved through the wilderness was enshrined in the body of Christ. Is this your meaning?

"I regard Jesus as the Shekinah *to us;* as a manifestation, embodiment, of God to us, but in a far higher sense than the old Shekinah; for he was not merely a symbol of the Divine perfections, but God's wisdom, love, purity, dwelt *really* in him. The fulness of the Godhead was *substantially* in him. His will corresponded precisely to the Divine. Jesus was the Shekinah in an unspeakably higher sense than the splendor in the cloud. . . . . There has often been an attempt to identify Christ with the Jehovah-Angel, by those who have considered the latter as a person, a spiritual being. But I cannot coincide with this. Indeed, the objection seems insuperable. If Jesus were indeed the Angel of Jehovah, by whom the Jewish dispensation was given and administered, how distinctly must this have been insisted upon by the Apostles in their discussions with the Jews! How bright, prominent, would be this relation of Jesus to the ancient people of God! What a place would this topic hold in the Epistle to the Hebrews! Instead of this, that Epistle begins with the words, — 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.' It seems impossible, if Jesus were the intelligent, conscious spirit who presided over the Hebrew nation, that we should be left to gather this from a few doubtful intimations. It would shine in a blaze of light.

"I read with much interest your solution of the problem

of 'the word' in the beginning of John. At this point I ask light, for no solutions satisfy me. I incline, myself, to the belief that 'the word' should be taken in the sense in which this term is habitually used in the New Testament. The 'Logos' there means 'the doctrine' or Christian truth; for example, 'The seed is the word,' 'The word shall judge him at the last day,' &c., &c. It seems natural that the Apostle, in the introduction to his Gospel, should speak the praise of 'the Gospel,' the everlasting word of God. Might he not intend to teach that the truth brought by Christ was not of yesterday, nor an arbitrary or temporary doctrine, but divine, immutable, everlasting truth, — that 'it was in the beginning'? He naturally identified this with the wisdom spoken of in Proverbs viii. 22-30. Considering him as *personifying* this truth, is his language at all hard, forced, — 'This was in the beginning with God. By it all things were made'? It contains the principles, the great ideas, according to and by which the universe was formed. 'It was God.' It is the very mind of God laid open, — *the eternal truth which constitutes the Divine Person.* 'In it was life,' spiritual, immortal life. This is the grand idea of the Christian truth, and the grand purpose of the creation. Man was made to live the *life of God* now and for ever. This idea is the 'light of men,' — the illumination of the soul. In the thickest darkness some faint ray of it shines forth. Christ has come 'to bring it to light.' The eternal life which was with the Father, which God promised before the world began, was made manifest by the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and 'brought life and immortality to light.' Thus divine, eternal truth was made flesh, or became a human being, or was embodied in Christ. 'I am the truth, the life.'

"I will stop, as my single object is, not to expound or defend, but simply to give some notion of an explana-

tion which often occurs to me as most probable. It retains the common, the New Testament sense of 'the word.' It seems to me most natural and fit as an introduction to the Gospel, and I think there is less forcing of the Apostle's words than in the usual interpretations; still, I do not say that it wholly satisfies me.

"Your hope of reconciling bodies of Christians who are thought to differ essentially is most gratifying to me. On this point I can say nothing to the public. A man belonging to a proscribed minority is always suspected, when he pleads for union and toleration. My own heart testifies to me, that I desire this union for the sake of the Christian cause, not for my own sake. Man's judgment of me is of less and less importance, as I approach the hour when I must stand before another judgment-seat. My relation to Jesus Christ is not to be touched in the least by man's wrath, but I do wish that the divisions which weaken and dishonor our religion may be done away, and that controversies which generally signify little may not stifle the spirit of Christianity. The difference of opinion in regard to Christ would not be found to amount to much, would Christians fully and freely lay open their minds to one another."

"*Newport*, June 21, 1841.* I have seen more of the Philadelphia Quakers and love them much; but, as a people, they have lost their first life. Rules, usages, and discipline have taken place of the spirit. My Quaker library has been increased by the journals of Elias Hicks, David Wheeler, and John Woolman. Have you read Woolman? I was so affected by his journal, two or three years ago, that I began a review of it, and went a good way, but was drawn aside by other objects. A Quaker lady told me, that Charles Lamb used to say that 'Woolman drew tears from his

* To Miss E. P. Peabody.

eyes.' In his exquisite essay on Quaker Meetings he says, — 'Get the writings of John Woolman by heart.'

"I have read this last week, with inexpressible delight, Nichol's Architecture of the Heavens. How it lifts one above the earth, and makes him free of the universe! What a wonderful being is man, who, from such slight hints, can construct the universe! How paltry seem the strifes of the world after this journey through creation! Should we explore this creation with such joy, were it not to be our everlasting inheritance?

"As to our friend Theodore Parker, he deals too much in exaggerations. He makes truth unnecessarily repulsive, and, as I think, sometimes goes beyond the truth. I shall judge for myself of his discourse.* Current opinions do not weigh a feather in such a case. Send me the sermon as soon as it is published. . . . . I infer from your letter that you are somewhat excited about the controversy in Boston. Possess your soul in patience. Let not rude attacks on any disturb you. Yours faithfully."

"*Newport*, July 6, 1841.† I thank you for Mr. Parker's sermon, and request you to thank him for the copy he sent me. You will wish to know my opinion; and, though I cannot go into the subject, I feel that I ought to send a line.

"The great idea of the discourse, the immutableness of Christian truth, I respond to entirely. I have labored to separate the notion of arbitrariness, positiveness, from men's notions of Christianity. That this religion is universal, eternal truth, the expression of the Divine mind, and corresponding to the Divine principles in human nature, is what I feel, perhaps, as deeply as any; and I was moved by Parker's strong, heartfelt utterance of it. Still, there was a

* Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity.

† To Miss E. P. Peabody.

good deal in the discourse I did not respond to. I grieved that he did not give some clear, direct expression of his belief in the Christian miracles. His silence under such circumstances makes me fear that he does not believe them. I see not how the rejection of these can be separated from the rejection of Jesus Christ. Without them he becomes a mere fable, for nothing is plainer than that from the beginning miracles constituted his history. There is not a trace of a time when he existed in men's minds without them. His resurrection was always the essential grand fact in men's impressions of him, — at least as distinctly recognized as his crucifixion. Miracles enter into all his conceptions of himself, as these have been handed down to us. They are so inwoven into all his teachings and acts, that in taking them away we have next to nothing left.

"Without miracles, the historical Christ is gone. No such being is left us, and in losing him how much is lost! Reduce Christianity to a set of abstract ideas, sever it from its teacher, and it ceases to be the 'power of God unto salvation.' Allow that it could give us the idea of perfection, — which I cannot concede, — what I want is, not the naked idea, but the existence, the realization, of perfection. Some seem to think that the *idea* of infinite perfection answers all the purposes of a God. But no; the *existence* of this perfection is the ground of my hope, my happiness, and so I want the *existence* of human perfection. Christian truth coming to me from the living soul of Jesus, with his living faith and love, and brought out in his grand and beautiful life, is a very, very different thing from an abstract system. The more I know of Jesus, the less I can spare him; and this place which he fills in my heart, the quickening office which his character performs, is to me no mean proof of his reality and his superhuman greatness.

"In regard to *miracles*, I never had the least difficulty. The *grand miracle*, as often has been said, is the *per-*

*fect, divine character* of Christ; and to such a being a miraculous mode of manifestation seems *natural.* It is by no figure of speech that I call Christ miraculous. He was more separate from other men than his acts from other acts. He was the sinless, spotless Son of God, distinguished from all men by that infinite peculiarity, freedom from moral evil. He was the *Perfect Image* of God, the perfection of the spiritual nature. Is it not plain that such a being must have been formed under discipline and influences distinct from those of all other men? that he cannot be explained by the laws under which we live? that he is thus a moral miracle, though not such as implies any compulsory influence? To such a being the miracles of Christ's history wonderfully agree. The outward and the inward correspond in God's system. God reveals himself to us by outward, material types. So his Son is revealed. What beautiful types of Christ's moral, healing, quickening power we have in the miraculous parts of his history! I feel, as I read them, that the conception of such a character as Christ, and the unfolding of it in such harmonious acts or operations, transcended human power, especially in that low moral age, and that nothing but the truth of the history, nothing but the actual manifestation of such a being in such forms, can explain or account for the Gospel narratives.

Mr. Parker supposes Christ's truth to have been revealed to him by his moral perfection. I will not stop to examine this, but will only say, that the men to whom Christ was to unfold this truth were unspeakably distant from this perfection, — that they were low, gross, spiritually dead, — that the spiritual evidence which was enough for him hardly gleamed on their darkened understandings. How needed was some outward, visible symbol of the truth to such minds! How did they need that the great spiritual Deliverer should be first made known to them by merciful, majestic acts of outward deliverance! Even the more spir-

itual men of that time, who had longings for immortality, were exceedingly assisted in their earthly state of mind by Christ's resurrection. It shows great ignorance of human nature, and of God's modes of operation, to suppose that he would approach a darkened, sensual world by purely spiritual, abstract teaching.

"As to Christ's *authority*, there is a sense in which I think it important, and reliance on it most natural and reasonable. I never meet a superior mind without some degree of reliance on it. From such a mind as Christ's I am sure I can hear nothing but truth. Whatever he says, I am sure will, when fully understood, be found in harmony with God's perfection. This leads me to a reverential study of his words, as of no other man. If in the course of such study I meet any thing which seems inconsistent with any known truth, and especially with the pure, liberal conceptions which Jesus has given me, I feel that I have not reached his meaning. I wait for further light, I examine the dark passage again and again, and the probability is that the light will at length shine. If not, I cannot suffer from my ignorance.

"I will only add, that to *us* the great evidence of the miracles is found in the religion itself, and in Christ's character, neither of which can be understood without them, and with which they have vital connections. Without the divine excellence of Christ, the testimony of the miracles would not satisfy us. This is the grand foundation and object of faith. Still, the miracles do not cease to be important, for they are among the bright manifestations of his character. Their harmony with it is a proof of its existence; and, above all, there are vast multitudes, who, with some moral appreciation of Christ, are yet so imperfect, so earthly, that these outward manifestations of his greatness and of his connection with God have real value as helps to faith.

"I have written this letter with an impatient haste, which

sometimes gets possession of me. I cannot correct it. Will you copy it fairly, and show it to Mr. Parker, letting him understand that I have written as a friend, and not as an author, and without any aim at precision. Will you then send it back to me, as there are thoughts which I may wish to expand when I can get time.

"Your sincere friend."

"*Newport*, July 18, 1840.* I have no time for a correspondence on the subject of my last. I was not able in that to do more than throw out some disconnected thoughts. Nor can I answer your last at any length, but send only a line of friendly admonition.

"I am grieved to find you talking so lightly of 'daring to be decidedly wrong.' I mean not to justify myself, but I ought to say that I have had but one form of 'caution,' as far as I know myself. I have never hesitated to say clearly, strongly, what I was persuaded was *true*. But I have not '*dared*' to send forth opinions round which doubts and objections lingered in my mind. I hold *a clear conviction* of truth to be essential to a religious teacher, and I reprobate as well as dread the teaching of that which we have not thought upon calmly and seriously, or which, on being examined, has opened before us problems, perplexities, difficulties, rendering much reflection needful in order to our speaking with the deliberate consciousness of truth. The want of reverence for truth, manifest in the rash teaching of our times, shocks me greatly. I owe the little which I am to the conscientiousness with which I have listened to objections springing up in my own mind to what I have inclined and sometimes thirsted to believe, and I have attained through this to a serenity of faith that once seemed denied in the present state.

* To Miss E. P. Peabody.

"I am also grieved to find you insensible to the clear, bright distinction between Jesus Christ and ourselves. To me, and I should think to every reader of the New Testament, he stands apart, alone, in the only particular in which separation is to be desired. He is a being of moral perfection, unstained by sin. The great consciousness which pervades, haunts, darkens, all human spirits, that of *moral evil*, throws not the slightest shade over him. His consciousness is his own, his whole tone, indeed, his own, and would be false in any other. Though he came to be an example, yet in the points in which we so much need an example, in our conflict with inward evil, in our approach to God as sinners in penitence and self-purification, he wholly fails us. It was in reference to this that I spoke of him as a 'moral miracle,' not intending by this to refer at all to the formation of his character, which, though wholly unknown to us, was wholly free, but to the exception which his character forms to *all human experience*. To my mind, he was intended to be an anticipation of the perfection to which we are guided, to reveal to us its existence, to guide and aid us towards it, to show us that which exists in a germ in all souls. This view you must have gathered from my writings. But my own history, and the history of the race, and of the best beings I have known, have taught me the immense distance of us all from Christ. He is to be approached by gradual self-crucifixion, by a war with the evil within us which will not end till the grave. The idea that the germ within us is to shoot up at once into the perfection of Jesus, — that we are to be 'gifted' in this stage of our being 'with his powers,' to be 'as powerful as a teacher,' — this certainly never entered my thoughts, and it shows such a self-ignorance, such an ignorance of human history and human life, that one wonders how it can have entered a sound mind. Of the formation of Christ's mind we know nothing, and the secrecy in which his spiritual history is veiled

is no small presumption against its applicableness to ourselves. Infinite wisdom has infinite modes of disciplining and unfolding the spirit. His great end of revealing to us the Perfect is equally answered, be his spiritual history what it may. All spirits, however unfolded, are essentially one. In the response of our spirits to his perfection, in his deep fraternal sympathy with the human soul, and in his divine promises, we have foundations of the profoundest, most joyful faith in our heavenly destiny. I am grieved, as I must say, by extravagances on this and other points, because I have lived in hope of the manifestation of a truth and spiritual life which is to give a new impulse to the world, and it is some trial, at my time of life, to have such hope baffled. However, I do not despair. The true teachers, who are to unite 'love and power and soundness of mind,' will come.

"As to Mr. Parker, I wish him to preach what he thoroughly believes and feels. I trust the account you received of attempts to put him down was in the main a fiction. Let the full heart pour itself forth. And still more it will rejoice me to find a good accomplished which I cannot anticipate. I want no dark prophecies accomplished, but I do assure you, the weaknesses of the good are among the trials of my faith. I repeat it, I am too much occupied to follow up this subject now. Give my love to Mr. Parker. I shall be glad to hear from him, and in perfect freedom. I think he is probably one of the many who are to be made wise by error and suffering, but I honor his virtues, I feel that he has seized on some great truths, and I earnestly desire for him the illumination which will make him an unmixed blessing to his fellow-creatures.

"P. S. I ought to tell you that I am the more disinclined to write on the topics of this letter, because I get no light from the new views. I seem to learn very little. Their vague generalities do not satisfy. You seem wholly to overlook the actual moral condition of the human race on which

Christianity is founded, and which renders it important to the multitude of men that they should have some evidence additional to that which is purely spiritual. Thousands and millions, who desire to believe in immortality, would be exposed to all the misgivings on that point which beset the best and strongest heathen minds, were it not for the resurrection and promises of Jesus Christ. Without the inward evidences of this truth, outward testimony would not satisfy me. But with so many phenomena hostile to these evidences, and with so much guilt and infirmity to darken the future, I am most grateful for the resurrection and promises of Christ. Shall I be helped by being robbed of these confirmations of my faith? At this moment, most of the 'true spiritualists' are in danger of losing their faith in immortality through their pantheistic notions of the soul, and its absorption in the only substance, Deity. These notions threaten to destroy all sense of moral responsibility and moral freedom. The spiritualist is often saved from the wreck of faith by Christianity without suspecting it.

"—— preached a touching sermon yesterday upon the 'loneliness' of Jesus Christ. I claim little resemblance to my divine Friend and Saviour, but I seem doomed to drink of this cup with him to the last. I see and feel the harm done by this crude speculation, whilst I also see much nobleness to bind me to its advocates. In its opinions generally I see nothing to give me hope. Example aids me only by the moral enthusiasm which its grandeur inspires. The noblest example, that of sympathy with the fallen, becomes impressive in proportion to the moral dignity of him who manifests it.

"Very sincerely, your friend."

"*Newport*, August, 1841.* I thank you for your long

* To Miss E. P. Peabody.

letter, but cannot reply, as I am otherwise engaged, and therefore I could only write with that 'unguardedness' which, though so beautiful to some, is to me a moral defect. I fear, or rather hope, that I wrote unguardedly about Pantheism. I am happy to say, that in my conversation with Transcendental ministers I have seen no Pantheism. Indeed, Mr. Alcott is the only man from whom I heard it; but I supposed I saw in him the tendency of a good many of the school. I knew too little, however, to warrant what I fear was a sweeping passage in my letter. So much for off-hand judgments.

"You will not infer from my letters that I am at all grieved at the publication of views from which I dissent. Let the honest, earnest spirit speak, and the more fully and freely for attempts to put it to silence. I am somewhat disappointed that this new movement is to do so little for the spiritual regeneration of society, which, however, must go on, and which no errors can long keep back. To me, Christ is the great spiritualist. This view binds me to him. Under him the battle of the human race is to be fought. Any speculations which throw mists or doubts over his history, and diminish the conviction of his grandeur and importance, are poor, and must come to naught. I do not believe that the great object of faith, which is the perfection of the human soul, or everlasting, unbounded spiritual development, is to be seized as a reality, and made the grand aspiration and end of life, without the quickening, inspiring influences of his character and truth. Indeed, perfection becomes a dim shadow, without the help of his living manifestation of it. I do fear a tendency, in the present movement, to loosen the tie which binds the soul to its great Friend and Deliverer. It would seem as if your experience had shown you human nature developing its highest sentiments without help and confirmation from abroad. To me, history and observation and experience read very different

lessons, and the consequences of overlooking them are not doubtful. The profound ignorance of Jesus Christ shown by those who find in him a restraint, and also talk of outgrowing him, is discouraging. I find in him only freedom.

"I have little hope in this new movement, except as it indicates deep wants of the soul, and a consciousness of its greatness. Nor have I fears. I believe in the purity of those who are concerned in it. I believe, too, that it will spread but little, for there is little in the times to favor any who separate themselves comparatively from the grand impulse given by Christ to the world. I see as yet but one decided step towards a higher practical manifestation of Christianity, and that is *Abolition*, and how imperfect that is we both know.

"I have seen, this last week, a member of the Mendon community. I look to *that* with a good deal of hope. I never hoped so strongly and so patiently. . . . . .

"What I write without time for reflection is a very poor picture of my thoughts. I shall have time to do justice to my views by and by. I will only add, that your speculations about the peculiarity of Jesus seem to me unphilosophical and fantastic. A seraph moving about among us with his wings would not be a greater anomaly. For the world, I would not have my faith in the soul's perfection and everlasting growth rest on such foundations. I attach, however, little importance to such speculations. Jesus will give little difficulty to those who understand the unity of the spiritual world, amidst all its varieties. I shall be glad to hear from you, though I write no more in reply.

"P. S. I hope the spiritualists will be calm and kind, as well as bold. Great indulgence is due to men who think that another is about to tear Christianity from them and their children. I hope I can bear even a bitter zeal from those *who honestly* view me in this light. The supercilious scof-

fers and selfish conservatives deserve less mercy. But there are few of these without a mixture of some real concern for Christianity, — and this is so infinite a good, even in its lower forms, that much unreasonable sensitiveness in regard to it may be forgiven."

"*September* 10, 1841.* Here, as in England, we have a stir. Happily, we have no material anti-supernaturalists. Our reformers are spiritualists, and hold many grand truths; but in identifying themselves a good deal with Cousin's crude system, they have lost the life of an original movement. Some among them seem to lean to the anti-miraculous, have got the German notions of 'myths,' &c., and I fear are loosening their hold on Christ. They are anxious to defend the soul's immediate connection with God. They fear lest Christ be made a barrier between the soul and the Supreme, and are in danger of substituting private inspiration for Christianity. Should they go thus far, my hopes from them will cease wholly; but as yet the elements are in great agitation, and it is hard to say how they will arrange themselves. I have great sympathy with the spiritualists; but I know so well the needs of the soul, and the conditions of its growth, that I look jealously on whatever may shake the foundations of Christianity. For myself, I see no inconsistency between admitting miracles, and resting Christianity on a spiritual basis, — between recognizing the inward as supreme, and reverencing the authority of Christ. You will see from these views that I go along with your movement more than with ours."

"Works may be strictly miraculous, though they do not transcend the natural power of a being. Were an angel to enter my family, and heal the sick, and raise the dead,

* To the Rev. James Martineau.

and sustain us for a year without food or sleep, and keep us in a perpetual glow of thought or feeling, he might exert only the powers of an angel. But the order of nature here would be violated, for this order prescribes spheres of action to beings. Were it the order of nature that angels should mix with us as men do with one another, here would be no miracle. The action of such a being as Jesus Christ on earth would be the same thing with the supposed agency of the angel.

"This argument against the miracles — I use the word for supernatural agency — is essentially the same with that of Rousseau and other skeptics. Rousseau says, in effect, — 'Prescribe, define, the laws of nature, and then I will allow you to call an event a miracle; we do not, cannot, know nature's course, so as to be authorized to call any thing a deviation. These are idiosyncrasies. Who can set limits to them? Were a man to raise the dead, what would this prove but some peculiar natural gift? He has a different brain or nervous system, or some peculiarity of constitution adapted to this effect. True philosophy requires us to set this down as a new fact or new power of nature. By and by another of these idiosyncrats will appear, and we shall learn more about it. Who can set limits to human power? If a man by his will can move his arm, why not the sun?'

"To this 'why not' I have no answer. I do not see why I might not be made to move the sun, as well as my arm. But when a man by such reasoning tries to satisfy me that I know nothing of nature's order, and cannot judge of what surpasses it, I feel as if he were trifling with me, and that such reasonings, if applied to any thing but religion, he would be the first to condemn. That Christ's miracles were wrought without faith in the subjects, we are assured in the case of his speaking to the sea, multiplying the *loaves*. . . . . .

"Christ's naturalness or unconsciousness in working miracles appears to some to be a proof that he was putting forth a power so much his own, that he thought no more of it than of speaking, and in it they see the ease of unbounded energy. I see in it the low estimation in which he held this energy. Miracle-working was to him nothing, compared with moral energy. Moral life, grandeur, beauty, so possessed him, that he was above all consciousness of his ability to work outward effects beyond other men. He was too absorbed in benevolent and spiritual results to think of physical might. One of the beauties of Christ's character is his superiority to his miracles. He tried to give his followers the same spirit, when he said, 'Rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you,' &c. Paul had caught his Master's inspiration, when he said, 'Though I have faith to move mountains and want *love*, I am *nothing*.' Jesus never speaks of his miracles but from necessity, nor does Paul. . . . . .

"That miracles are in harmony with the great purposes of nature, that nature's order is never transgressed but to accomplish the end for which it was instituted, that they may be reduced to the great law by which matter obeys spirit and is made subordinate to its growth, that they are regularly connected with certain antecedent circumstances and never occur but in certain exigencies, — all this I believe, and it seems to me that very possibly, after all our apparent difference, we shall be found fighting in the main about words. . . . . .

"Here I was about to stop, but new thoughts rush into my mind. I see nothing in experience to justify the notion, that faith or goodness gives us any *direct* power over foreign matter. Were this a law of nature, it must appear in the lapse of ages.

"I hold in no very high estimation our unintelligent power over matter, and to this head I have always reduced

miracles, whether justly or not. By unintelligent power I mean such as my will exerts over my arm, in which case I know nothing of the connection of will with the motion of the muscle used, &c. Intelligent power over matter, that which man gains by studying its laws, by skilful inventions, &c., — this I respect highly. Now I have always been in the habit, without any theory, of ascribing the former to Christ in case of miracles. We know it was the only power of the Apostles. I do not suppose, when he healed disease, that he had the whole frame laid open to him, — that he anticipated all the discoveries of anatomists, saw the obstructions, the deranged functions, the diseased organs, and by intelligent action on each restored the system to perfect health. I always think of him as willing the effect just as I will to move an arm, that is, as putting forth unintelligent power. Such an act, *considered in itself*, is inferior in dignity to the power which the physician puts forth, who by wisdom heals a disease. All the superiority of the miracle consists in this, — that it lies *beyond the agency of man*, and thus attests a peculiar presence of God. The idea of the peculiar presence of God predominates in all that Christ says of his miracles, — an idea resting on the inadequacy of all natural regular powers to their production. As such they were viewed by the spectators, and as such they produced the effect on the human mind for which they were wrought." *

"I have heard Elias Hicks spoken of with great reverence. Those who best know him, as I understand, honor him as a man of deep piety; and I doubt not that among his followers may be found many exemplary Christians. But I apprehend that this sect, if it may be so called, are exposed to what Unitarians would deem great errors. They

* To the Rev. W. H. Furness.

are, indeed, ultra-Quakers, carrying the doctrine of *immediate revelation* to an extent which greatly diminishes the value of the New Testament. All Quakerism is liable to this objection. By teaching that every man is favored with an immediate revelation from God, which ought to be his supreme standard, it gives a secondary place to the teachings of Christ. I fear that Elias Hicks and his adherents are following this distinctive opinion of Quakers into consequences which, whether true or false, are very remote from the views taken by Unitarians. I have heard of their speaking of the inspiration of Jesus Christ as differing very little, if at all, from what is granted to holy men at all times; so that, in their views of it, the New Testament cannot claim the peculiar authority which we attribute to it.

"This is a very important difference. Unitarianism may be said to be distinguished by nothing more than by the *prominence* which it gives to the *teaching* of Christ. Whilst Trinitarians and Calvinists believe that Jesus came chiefly to make satisfaction for human guilt, Unitarians believe that the great object of his mission was 'to bear witness to *the truth*.' They esteem Christ an unspeakable blessing, on account of the unparalleled value of the *truth* which he communicates. They believe that he alone reveals the Father, and brings life and immortality to light. They believe that all other illumination fades away before the brightness of his Gospel. Now, if the common accounts given of Elias Hicks and of his adherents be in any measure true, little sympathy exists between them and Unitarians on this important point. They ascribe inspiration to Christ, but not such as makes him the supreme Guide of the human race; and still more, they expose themselves, we fear, to gross delusions by the habit of tracing to inspiration any singular operations of their own minds. At least, such are the accounts given of them, and should these accounts be

accurate, it is not easy to set limits to the extravagances which they may send forth as Divine revelations.

"In what I have said I mean not to condemn. I want more extensive knowledge of the views of this body of Quakers. I simply mean to say, that, as a Unitarian, I have no disposition to identify their cause with my own, and for this simple reason, that we differ in some important respects. I can 'greet them as friends and brothers,' just as I greet all good and pious men of all classes of Christians. I can and do rejoice that they have thrown off the bondage of human creeds. I hope much from the spirit of inquiry which is at work among them. But I have fears, too, and, I must say, many fears. I fear that they may prefer what they esteem a particular inspiration communicated to themselves to the everlasting and universal lights of reason and of the Christian revelation. I fear that a false standard may gradually supplant the true ones. I shall rejoice to find that I err. But it seems to me not wise to expose ourselves to misapprehensions by seeming to ally ourselves with those concerning whom we cannot but fear." *

"*Boston*, November, 1841.† You ask my opinion concerning the origin of moral evil; a question which has puzzled far greater minds than mine. I pretend not to explain it, but I find some solution of it in our moral freedom. When I think that we owe to moral evil the character of Christ, and the celestial virtues with which he inspires his followers, I see a bright light shed over this mystery. The solution of the problem concerning the origin of moral evil, generally given, is liable to this serious and fatal objection, that the explanation is more difficult, perplexing, irreconcilable, and contrary to our ideas of God's perfections, than the fact to be explained.

* From the Christian Register.

† To Mr. Harland Coultas, Malton.

"You ask me to direct your attention to some suitable books. It is so long since I studied controversial theology out of any book but the Bible, that I scarcely know what to say to you. In this country, a venerable man, Noah Worcester, has written a tract on the Atonement, and also a work entitled 'Last Thoughts.'"

"In my present state of mind I cannot but feel some wonder at the distress which you experience from the threatening language in the New Testament. If I understand your letter, your imagination is haunted with the idea of literal flames, and hell is dreaded, not as including all moral evils, but as a great fire. The spiritual interpretation of Scripture has so far made its way among all denominations of Christians in this part of the country, that I do not know an individual who believes in the literal fire as the punishment of the condemned. In regard to the word *eternal*, this is used in the Scriptures again and again, according to the free, bold style of the Oriental writings, to express any great duration. Thus the mountains and the Jewish law are spoken of as everlasting. If you will read the prophetic writings, you will see in them the sublimest characteristics of poetry. I suppose that you are aware that they are poems, not prose. They abound in the boldest, most magnificent figures, and, unless interpreted according to their poetic character, will lead into all imaginable absurdities. The prophetic language of the New Testament respecting future punishment, and respecting Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, is taken from the old prophets, whose writings formed a most familiar part of the literature of the Jews, and must be interpreted accordingly. I beg you to read carefully the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Isaiah, containing the prediction of the destruction of Babylon, and you will see the freedom of the prophetic style, and the

danger of interpreting it as if it were the language of precise and cautious logic."

1841. "These remarks, I think, will help to remove your Scriptural difficulties. I see, however, that you have a deeper difficulty. The fearful amount of sin and suffering in the world depresses and troubles you. How is God's goodness to be reconciled with what we see and read of in human affairs? This is the old problem of the 'origin of evil,' which has perplexed thinking minds from the beginning of the world. I cannot hope to explain what the greatest minds have left obscure. In truth, I do not desire to remove obscurity from Providence; for in making the universe a plain thing, I should bring it down to the littleness of my own mind; I should rob it of all its grandeur. If it be infinite, the work of an infinite mind, it must transcend my conceptions, stretch beyond my intellect, and I must live encircled with impenetrable mysteries. The darkness of God's providence is to me an expression of its *vastness*, its immeasurable grandeur. I cannot doubt. I adore.

"Of much that is evil in human life I see the cause and the cure. Many forms of human suffering I would not remove, if I could; for I see that we owe to them all the interest and dignity of life, and I am sure, that, in proportion as I shall be able to penetrate the system, much which now perplexes me will be revealed in a glorious light. Man, if a *free moral being*, must be tried, must be exposed to temptation, must have a wide range of action, must be liable to much sin and much suffering. He cannot be happy in the beginning of his career, for, from the essential laws of a free being, he can have no happiness but what he wins amidst temptation. A brute may be made as happy as he can be, at first. Man, God's free moral child, cannot know happiness till by his own striving he has risen to goodness and sanctity. I do

not see how sin and suffering can be removed, but by striking out from our nature its chief glories.

"I have expressed some views on this general subject in a discourse recently published, in consequence of the loss of an excellent friend on board the Lexington, which I send you. Perhaps some of these may interest and relieve you. It is so long since doubts of the Divine goodness have crossed my mind, that I hardly know how to meet them. This truth comes to me as an intuitive one. I meet it everywhere. I can no more question it than I can the supreme worth and beauty of virtue."

END OF VOL. II.